

Sewanee Review

APRIL-JUNE, 1937

Granville Hicks and Marxist Criticism C. I. Glicksberg 129

The series of essays on contemporary American critics of which this is another installment has attracted wide-spread attention here and abroad. Dr. Glicksberg teaches in the Public Schools of Newark, N. J. In the July-September issue Dr. Glicksberg's essay on Carl Van Doren will appear and in the October-December issue, his comment on Allen Tate and the Agrarians.

The March of Man (poem) trans. by E. M. Kayden 141

Interest in the poetry of Maxim Gorky has recently been growing, as a result of the current proletarian efforts of British and American poets. Mr. Kayden, who is Professor of Economics in the UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH, is a distinguished contributor and reviewer to the Yale, Virginia, and SEWANEE REVIEWS. Aside from his professional competency as an economist, he is a gifted poet and has an unusual knowledge of trends in poetry here and abroad. His translation of "The March of Man" is the first English translation of Maxim Gorky's poem.

Totalitarian Clouds Bertram Morris 150

Accepting the challenge of countries which prefer dictatorial to democratic forms of government those who are not ready to admit the superiority of dictatorships must exercise their democratic responsibility to inquire into the reasonableness of dictatorships. In this present essay, Mr. Morris reveals the fascist leanings of Plato, Hobbes, and Locke and discovers the necessity of critical revision of traditional estimates of these political philosophers. Mr. Morris is at Northwestern University, Evanston, Ill.

Hounds on the Mountain (poem) James Still 165

Mr. Still's work which was first published in this Quarterly has established him as the Robert Frost of the South. His poems which have appeared at frequent intervals in this Quarterly for the past four years, as well as others which have appeared elsewhere, are now in press and will soon be published in book form by a prominent New York publishing house.

I Leave Them All (poem) Elspeth Bragdon 166

A well-known New England poet who lives in Springfield, Massachusetts, contributes another poem to this Quarterly. Hitherto, Mrs. Bragdon has written under the pen-name of "Elspeth" but now reveals her identity. The poem suggests the scenery of the mountains and sea of Mount Desert Island, Maine.

Victoria Invicta Frances W. Knickerbocker 168

The editor had intended some kind of a coronation piece as an "Aside and Soliloquy" but the abdication of his favorite British king made it impossible for him to salute his successor. So, since the new sovereigns accede to the throne in the best traditions of Victorianism and demonstrate the collapse of the cocktail era, the present piece on triumphant Victorianism, written by the editor's wife, appropriately serves as salvo to the new royalty of Britain. There is some satisfaction in the triumph of ideals for which this Quarterly has consistently contended for forty-five years.

Gentian, not Rose Fred Lewis Pattee 180

The doyen of American interpreters of American Literature, Dr. Fred Lewis Pattee (now Professor of English in Rollins College, Winter Park, Florida) submits a revised estimate of the life and achievement of Emily Dickinson. With robust scepticism, he questions the verity of the Emily legend and assays the quality of her poetry. The devotees of the New England nun insist she is a "rose", but Dr. Pattee prefers Emily's own valuation that she was only a "gentian".

D. H. Lawrence and the Primitive William Y. Tindall 198

Scholarly investigation and analysis of the sources of D. H. Lawrence's prose disclose the modes of Lawrence's naturalistic mysticism. In this important essay, Dr. Tindall gently discusses the nature of Lawrence's creative efforts. His playful irony reduces Lawrence's "genius" to something like sane proportions.

Dr. Tindall is one of the ablest of the younger American scholars. Awarded the Proudfit Fellowship in English Letters at Columbia University, he has brilliantly displayed his powers as scholar and critic, and is now one of the most promising members of the English Department of Columbia University in the City of New York.

Om Geoffrey Stone 212

So much stilted puffery of Harvard's last blossom of the aesthetic age, George Santayana, resulted from the publication of *THE LAST PURITAN*, that this *JEU D'ESPRIT*, mumming the style of Santayana and the ultimate emptiness of his matter, comes as a relief. The wicked wag responsible is lieutenant to Der Fuehrer of *THE AMERICAN REVIEW*, and frequently writes for that depressing periodical. The titular syllable of the essay is presumably Tibetan and is the last, holy sound of the Veiled Lhama when he reveals the ultimate mystery.

Among the Quarterlies Arthur E. DuBois 216

The commentator is Professor of English at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. In this installment, he continues his tilting at the inability of Quarterly editors to make up their minds in formulating policies to distinguish their periodicals from monthlies and weeklies. The particular question which disturbs him now is the moot one of regionalism. Like many other people who never edited anything, he would like this Quarterly to go the way of all flesh and submit to current fads. But though the *SEWANEE REVIEW* salutes its better-known contemporaries and envies them their quality, it quietly proceeds on its own way, within the frame of its own past and sense of what emphases are needed at present, but prefers to imitate neither the *YALE REVIEW*, the *VIRGINIA QUAR-*

TERLY nor the SOUTHERN QUARTERLY. It is the father of them all but it is still hearty, though hale.

Three PoemsMarion Canby 227

These three poems, "Weird Sublimation", "Vagrant", and "To Honor Beauty", are by Mrs. Henry Seidel Canby and will be included in her forthcoming volume of poetry.

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WHY SEWANEE?

PRESIDENT HUTCHINS of the University of Chicago in his *Higher Learning in America* calls for a re-organization of the concept of a university.

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APRIL-JUNE, 1937

by Charles I. Glicksberg

GRANVILLE HICKS AND MARXIST CRITICISM

C RITICS of proletarian literature, those on the right and especially those on the left, have sown confusion with a generous hand. The critics opposed to the Marxist categorical interpretation of cultural and art forms have contended that no such thing as proletarian literature existed; art, they maintained, was universal and timeless and had no direct connection with political or socio-economic problems. Proletarian literature, in their eyes, was nothing more than pamphleteering, unadulterated propaganda. While not denying that proletarian literature was propaganda, the left-wing critics have confidently retorted that all writing was in the nature of propaganda, overt or implicit. From neither side did one receive a clear-cut, satisfying definition of that which was the subject of discussion. Now before literary criticism can arrive at sound and convincing conclusions, it must concern itself with concrete problems, with the important task of definition. Marxist criticism has too often substituted a clamorous ideal for logical and empirical critical analysis. But a wish-fulfillment is neither a category of thought nor a literary form. The point at issue is not whether proletarian literature can or cannot exist. The

problem that urgently calls for solution is that of definition based on experience and achievement, not on theory, though that theory be the Marxian dialectic.

The Marxist critics have been having it too much their own way thus far. Driven by the compulsive desire to change the structure of society and regarding all men, whether they be writers or laborers, as soldiers in a class war, they naturally conceive literature as primarily a class weapon. Hence they issue ultimatums demanding that writers present a united front with the advance guard of the proletariat in denouncing capitalistic exploitation and in fighting for the triumph of communism. This, however, is not the way proletarian literature or any other type of literature will emerge. It will not be born by fiat. Moreover, it is plainly inconsistent of these critics, presumably close and orthodox students of Marx, to insist that writers do this or that. If the materialistic interpretation means anything, it teaches that the modes of production determine the cultural superstructure, the system of ideologies, ethics, philosophy, literature, and art that obtains within a given epoch. Hence in a milieu in which the bourgeoisie rule and capitalistic production prevails, it would be folly to expect the growth of a proletarian literature, however it be defined, save one of protest and compassion. Furthermore, such a literature could be written only by those who knew the life of the laboring class intimately from all sides. The majority of writers, since they stem from the bourgeoisie for the most part, would have to content themselves with mirroring the existing relations of society, the sector of social life and experience with which they are most familiar.

From the point of view of a writer, the less he knows about the formal aspects of Marxism the better. The most pious, the most truly religious soul is not necessarily the finest talmudic disputant. Similarly, a writer can devote himself more earnestly to his work of creation when his mind is not cluttered by arid, arbitrary formulas. His task is to picture the concrete human life in all its variety, beauty, and communicable emotional intensity. His not to reason dialectical processes into the warp and woof of human behavior and living experience.

No one here contends that the writer should stop thinking or

that he should close himself to the influence of politics and economics. What is maintained is that these should not be permitted to gain a primary and exclusive ascendancy to the detriment of his proper sphere and function—the artistic communication of experience. If what he depicts be humanly and objectively true, it will bear embedded within itself all the sociological implications that will delight the heart of a Michael Gold. If the work is intrinsically false, no amount of didacticism or theorizing will save it. The point is that a work which has but a slight connection with socio-economic forces would be definitely injured by the intrusion of Marxist ideas. The revolutionary critic rises to reply that everything is inextricably social in value, but can he deny that there are certain degrees of difference which are all-important for purposes of valid critical judgment? A novel like *Maria Chapdelaine*, a beautiful and touching idyl of love in the Canadian woods, would lose its aesthetic magic if given a forced Marxian interpretation.

The extremes to which Marxist criticism will go can perhaps best be illustrated by briefly discussing some of the sweeping statements Mr. Joseph Freeman makes in his introduction to the "official" collection, *Proletarian Literature in the United States*. His method of reasoning is highly ingenious. The critic, he declares, must take sides, and he makes no effort to hide the intensity of his partisanship. What is singular and open to question is his attempt to expand that politicalized attitude into a full-fledged theory of criticism. No one is here questioning the sincerity of his motives. Criticism *per se* is not concerned with intentions but with methodology, sound aesthetic insight, freshness and accuracy of perception, cogent analysis. A creed is not an aesthetic. But this is precisely what the Marxist critics have done and persist in doing: they wish to transform a political and economic doctrine into a system of aesthetics. On the premise that the experiences of the poet are conditioned by the class to which he belongs, they have erected an elaborate superstructure. The class struggle becomes the prime mover of the creative process, the *deus ex machina*, the central organic principle underlying literature and art. A weighted contrast is drawn between the essential realities expressed by proletarian writers and the trivial themes exploited by

bourgeois writers who espouse a philosophy of art for art's sake. Invariably the contrast is painted in extreme shades of black and white. It possesses the rigid absolutism of the theological opposition between God and devil, saint and sinner, heaven and hell. Thus Mr. Freeman consistently arrives at a new kind of experience—proletarian experience, as if experience in all its infinite variety could be legitimately interpreted in terms of class divisions. If one spoke of proletarian logic or proletarian science, the absurdity of the fallacy would be immediately apparent, but in the field of aesthetic confusion fallacies can flourish for a long time undetected. Symbols of abstraction supplant the logic of experience. Strip experience of the class struggle, Mr. Freeman declares, and what is left to art but private sensations, the ennui and futility of the parasitic class? Art is either one thing or another, bourgeois or proletarian. Take your choice, writers, and be damned or saved accordingly. Any one who questions the Marxist system of aesthetics—like that profound and original critic, I. A. Richards—is said to fall into “a morass of idealistic gibberish.”

II.

Such an attitude is typical of Marxist criticism. It is developed militantly, systematically, and at great length by Mr. Granville Hicks, the chief and most gifted “orthodox” interpreter of literary Marxism in America. To those not familiar with his personal history it will probably come as a complete surprise to learn that he attended the Harvard Theological School. His first book, *Eight Ways of Looking at Christianity*, published in 1926, discussed the advantages and defects of Christianity as a form of faith. The passage from religious faith, through intellectual doubt, to extreme Communism is a transition that may seem strange but is psychologically explicable. Mr. Ernest Sutherland Bates in a searching review of Mr. Hicks' *The Great Tradition*, first indicated how Communism probably acted as a surrogate for the lost mystical sense of communion with the universe. Thus it was a relatively easy matter for Mr. Hicks to transform God and Devil into proletarian and bourgeois in a new Marxist cosmos.

In “Literature and Revolution”, an address delivered before the

College Conference on English in the Central Atlantic States on December 1, 1934, Mr. Hicks attempts to clarify his aesthetic theory together with its social and philosophical implications. Though not appearing as the official spokesman of the Communist Party, he makes it clear at the outset that his views as a critic are organically tied up with and would involve a defence of dialectical materialism. For his dialectical materialism also includes the Marxist doctrine of the class struggle with its corollary, the overthrow of the capitalist state and the achievement of a proletarian dictatorship.

He begins his exposition by defining literature as "the presentation of a particular fragment of experience in the light of the author's conception of the totality of experience." A writer, he contends, simply bathes an immediate experience in the pervasive atmosphere of a larger, more inclusive antecedent experience. All art implies an act of choice; therefore the existence of standards or values determines the principles of choice. At their highest level, these standards or values are integrated into a *Weltanschauung*. Every writer expresses in his work a philosophy, a body of assumptions and beliefs. The author's philosophy, whether explicit or non-intellectualized, is fundamental.

It is the writer's world-attitude, Mr. Hicks insists that is of paramount importance if we would seek to understand him. This alone will determine the solution to the difficult problem of aesthetic excellence, of what distinguishes talent from genius. An author cannot be abstracted from the world of which he is a part; his place in it must be thoroughly examined. This seems plausible until Mr. Hicks proceeds to specify and to apply the formula to particular cases. Obviously, while a knowledge of an author's world-attitude is helpful in disclosing many significant aspects of his work, it affords no clue to the understanding of its aesthetic significance; why it is more dynamic, more alive, than other contemporary works.

But Mr. Hicks is determined to bring his Marxist artillery into action and he thus expertly executes a brilliant series of dialectical manoeuvres. An author's world-attitude is a social product; it springs from his contact with the environment. From birth his

mind is subjected to a continuous social, educative process. Environmental determination is decisive. Boldly he appropriates the psychological conclusions of I. A. Richards, that a work of literature effects a transition from a chaotic to a better organized state, and adapts them to his own purposes. It does, reasons Mr. Hicks, by virtue of the world-attitude of the writer. Then by means of a neat logical jump he decides that the most valid world-attitude today is the class-struggle. Industrialism is the crucial problem of the modern world which is split into two contending camps, the exploited and the exploiters. The writer is either on the side of life, represented by the ultimately victorious proletariat, or else he is on the side of regression, death, symbolized by the ruling capitalist class.

III.

All this may be challenged on two counts.

First of all, the concept of the class struggle is not necessarily a world-attitude, despite its far-reaching implications. It may constitute part of a world-philosophy; it is not and cannot be equivalent to the whole. In its concrete manifestations—and how else is the writer to know it and deal with it?—it is a political and economic attitude. If the writer does not feel himself qualified to deal with these basic problems, if, besides, he has little knowledge of and less interest in them, why compel him to adopt and incorporate in his work an attitude that he regards as alien and irrelevant?

Secondly, what Mr. Hicks fails to point out in his monistic reduction of the modern world to a single economic principle, is that the Marxist world-attitude is not the only possible world-attitude for the writer. Should the writer not accept Marxism, it does not follow that he thereby weds himself to capitalism. What is more, the writer may be concerned with those human particulars which project a recurrent universal pattern of experience—themes of joy and grief, birth and death, the march of the seasons, the isolation and communion of men, the need for love—and which have no direct relation to the material conditions of society.

Now an economic interpretation can, it is true, be imposed on

these themes, but only at the cost of much dialectical straining and stretching. The writer, at any rate, is not conscious of this interpretation and the work is better off without its mechanical imposition. As Mr. Erskine Caldwell once put it, he was too deeply absorbed in telling stories to worry about capitalism and communism and what rôle they played in his work. To use the terminology suggested by Mr. James T. Farrell in his recent book on criticism, the aesthetic category is as important as the functional category; both must be understood in their interrelations. It is absurd to reduce a writer's work to a world-attitude, then to demonstrate that that this world-attitude is in conflict with the Marxist viewpoint, and finally, to condemn not only the world-attitude but the work in which it is embodied as defeatistic, regressive, escapist—or by any other pejorative adjective. Yet this is exactly the practice of Mr. Hicks and his Marxist colleagues in their treatment of writers like Hemingway and Joyce and Faulkner.

Mr. Hicks wields the Marxist yardstick in criticism with rigorous consistency. If the function of literature is to create a better organization in the individual, then it does not perform that function unless it establishes attitudes that permit him to live at peace and in harmony with his fellow-men. Presumably the acceptance of the theory of class-conflict does just that, while any other attitude is injurious and invalid since it refuses to admit the existence of irreconcilable oppositions. According to Mr. Hicks, "there is one conflict that permits of no peaceful solution. I refer, of course, to the class struggle. The proletariat can, in the long run, be satisfied with nothing less than all that it produces. Since, moreover, the developing contradictions of capitalism result in greater and greater deprivation for the proletariat, it is driven by sheer necessity to demand the abolition of exploitation."

After this rousing re-affirmation of the familiar Marxist thesis of the inevitability of the class struggle, Mr. Hicks concludes that the form of integration possible in capitalist society is unsatisfactory to proletarians. The critic must acknowledge that these irreconcilable oppositions exist and decide once for all where he stands, and in whose interests he wishes the desired integration to take place. Mr. Hicks has chosen to side with the proletariat and urges all intellectuals in America to make the same uncompromising

choice. "Socialization is the only preventive of both Fascism and war, and socialization can be brought about only by the proletariat, not because of some peculiar virtue resident in factory workers, but because it is the one class that stands to gain so much by socialization and to lose so much by the perpetuation, especially in a fascist form, of capitalism that it would be willing to make the sacrifices that revolution entails." This in brief is his explanation why he has made the proletariat his sole point of reference. This is his norm, the foundation of value. In reply to the charge that the proletariat is an abstraction, he simply replies that the critic's norm is always bound to be an abstraction. In comparison with the abstractions employed by the Humanists and by a critic like I. A. Richards, he believes that the conception of the "normal" proletariat held by the Marxist critic is "concrete and realistic, based on an understanding of the historic rôle of the class and on first-hand experience of its spirit as displayed in crucial struggles." The practical consequences of such a creed are that literature ought to create a revolutionary spirit in the proletariat. This, Mr. Hicks assures us, is not an unworthy or unwarranted conception of literature. For in serving the revolutionary cause, "the revolutionary writer is merely expressing his own world-attitude and fulfilling his own desires. To that extent he is like writers of all classes and all ages. And the critic, when he judges literature by its effect in preparing the proletariat for its struggles, is applying a criterion that does not differ in kind from the criteria of other critics."

IV.

In *The Great Tradition* these Marxist principles are applied to a critical period of American literature—a procedure which produces some astonishing results. Everything is examined and judged in the light of the class struggle. With practically no exceptions, the major writers of the nineteenth century are condemned as feeble, frustrated, confused, ineffectual, and this not on psychological or aesthetic grounds. No, they were failures because they did not perceive the underlying economic implications of industrialism, the rise of factories, the emergence of the machine, the exploitation of man-power, the relentlessness and inevitability

of the class struggle. He confesses that it is idle to reproach men like Emerson, Hawthorne, Thoreau, and Melville, "for not being something other than what they were", but hastens to add with glib casuistry that it is only by understanding "what they might have been that we can realize their short-comings and appreciate their failure to inspire their successors." Concerning such irrational contradictions there is little one can say. If conformity to the Marxist ideology is to be the final standard of aesthetic excellence, then Mr. Hicks is perfectly justified in declaring that James Russell Lowell contributed "almost nothing" to the development of American literature, that our leading writers did not interpret the profound changes going on in American life. What if they were fired with earnestness and indignation, what if they composed their work and explained character in accordance with some lofty ethical standard—all that is not enough. Either they complacently acquiesced in the exploitation of America's natural and human resources in the interests of a few or else they advocated that this should be carried out in the interests of all the people. Only in that way could they be truly judged and understood.

The Great Tradition is thus a typical example of history as seen through a pair of Marxist spectacles. It is a vision of what might have been, the heights unachieved, the glory and power unconsummated, had American writers only been aware of their social responsibility and borne it with courage and conviction. That responsibility, we learn, entails not only a mastery of Marxist theory, but an open alliance with the proletariat. Mr. Hicks' procedure as historian and critic is extremely simple. First he sketches in the general social and economic background of a period, the interlocked forces and classes, the rôle of the individual in this conditioned environment. Then he surveys a particular writer's achievement in that period and in unmistakable accents indicates the paucity of his contribution, the limitations of his social viewpoint, the Marxist rationalization of his failure. Each author, even those who have recently professed a feeling of sympathy for the working class, is solemnly lectured on his ideological weakness, his evasions, his insufficiencies, his blindness, his deviations from the correct party line. The utterances are those of a Marxist priest, righteously enraged at the evils and follies of literary men.

Hatred, he declares in one place, is a healthier emotion than pity, and hatred, by and large, is the chief emotion that animates his critical judgments. The choice is clear and imperative for the writers of the present and the future: "Either they accepted the existing system or they whole-heartedly opposed it. If they opposed it, they must work to overthrow it; if they accepted it, they must work to defend it."

There, challengingly stated, is the theory of the class struggle applied to literature. The only alternative to intellectual confusion or benighted pessimism is faith in the victory of the proletariat. The solution to our contemporary difficulties is to be found in the books by Karl Marx. The central issue in America as elsewhere is the class struggle. If the writer ignores it, he cannot possibly formulate a clear and unified interpretation. Impartiality, moreover, is impossible. Revolutionary writers will be imbued with a rare courage, for they will know "that what is struggling for utterance on their pages is the spirit, not of an isolated individual, not of some literary clique, not of some decadent tradition, but the spirit of that class with which the future rests and into whose hands the highest hopes of mankind are entrusted."

V.

It would take too long to attempt to refute all the contradictions that grow out of the application of Marxist canons to literature. Since it is an expression of human life in its entirety, literature may be approached from a number of different angles, each of which, taken separately, seems to lead to the heart of the mystery. The purely aesthetic, the moralistic, the judicial, the historical, the impressionistic, the Humanistic, the scientific, the religious, the Marxian—each of these, when applied, naturally produces a startlingly disparate result. Nor need this be surprising once the initial premises are taken into consideration. One sets up an hypothesis and then diligently digs up colored evidence to confirm it. Since literature, like life itself, is almost infinitely varied in its manifestations and since its multifarious aspects can be variously interpreted, the conclusions that we draw generally square with our basic assumptions. One writer confidently aims to prove that the re-

ligious and ethical outlook is vigorously reasserting itself in American literature; another historian demonstrates to his satisfaction that the frontier exerted a decisive influence in shaping the course of our native culture; a third places emphasis on the Quaker element in American letters; a fourth on the values derived from European culture, a fifth on the borrowings from the Orient. It is possible to analyse literature from the point of view of science, theology, politics, economics, metaphysics, morals, sociology, or aesthetics.

Marxism, as was observed in the case of Mr. Hicks, takes its stand on the fundamental issue of the class conflict. Literature is made out to be a function of economics. Any one who ventures to reject this conception is, of course, immediately set down as a reactionary. So thoroughly is Mr. Hicks convinced of the righteousness of his cause that any one who does not espouse his point of view is denounced in no uncertain terms as a renegade or a coward or a fool. Are not his own hands clean? Is not the proletarian movement bound to triumph in the end? Hence his fertile genius for discovering conspiracies, signs of persecution, underhand plots, lies, slanders, and detractions in the capitalist-controlled press. When Mr. J. M. Murry published his *The Necessity of Communism*, a mystico-Christian version of Marxism, Mr. Hicks hailed it in comradely fashion as "the culminating achievement of a long and singularly asinine career." He evidently refuses to distinguish between logic and loyalty. Only by a perverse distortion of the plain facts can the literature of any period be made to appear a pure function of economics. There is no direct, no immediate relationship between economic conditions and relations and the production of literary works. Literature cannot be forced into the Procrustean frame of dialectical materialism. The class struggle is not the whole of life. Literature, like all art, follows its own organic laws. There is no necessary correlation between the social outlook of a writer and the artistic merit of his work. To emphasize the former to the exclusion of the latter, as Mr. Hicks has done, is to end in a worse critical confusion than any that the so-called bourgeois, liberal critics are guilty of.

It is a confessed sign of weakness that the Marxist critics in their preoccupation with ultimate aims and functional values have over-

looked the practical means by which these aims and values are to be realized. This is especially evident in their fanatical and fantastic pronouncements on literature. Granted for the moment that the novel is to be bottomed on the dialectical materialism of Marx and Lenin, the pivotal critical problem still remains: How is this to be achieved in terms of the artistic medium employed? What materials and what methods will best secure the desired effect? What changes in form, style, and the communicative process in general will have to be made? Until questions like these are answered, Marxist criticism will consist solely of brave but ineffectual abstractions. These questions cannot be ignored. Because they have been ignored so much confusion, so much hair-splitting, so much futile debating and vain juggling of words, so much weary waste of energy and effort, has resulted.

What proletarian writers badly need at present is a critic or a group of critics who will for the time being forget their political differences and dogmas and endeavor to formulate specific canons of criticism not based on categorical imperatives. Let these critics, if they can, do for proletarian literature what I. A. Richards has done for a literature as a whole. It would be a good sign, too, if they gave over mud-slinging and denunciation and paid some heed to unorthodox critics like Kenneth Burke and Edmund Wilson and Max Eastman and Joseph Wood Krutch who, regardless of party affiliations, insist on strict definitions, on preserving the skeptical attitude of inquiry, on examining the content of all vague emotive terms, on building a firm foundation of ideas. Such critical stock-taking would deliver us from the ineptitudes which schematically identify the behavior and mentality of an individual with those that are common to the class to which he is assigned, and which appraise the total aesthetic significance of a writer's work in terms of a conceptualized entity—the class struggle. The disparaging remark about Lowell may well be applied to Mr. Hicks—he has thus far contributed “almost nothing” to the development of American criticism. His fiery paraphrases of Marxist doctrine, however effective as propaganda and as a declaration of faith, shed no light on the primary function of literary criticism, which is the aesthetic analysis and evaluation of literature in accordance with its own laws and processes.

translated from the Russian

by E. M. Kayden

THE MARCH OF MAN

MAXIM GORKY

[The appearance of Gorky in Russian literature, in 1895, was an event as sublime as it was phenomenal. Young, daring, full of rebellious wrath, he at once made captive the imagination of youth with his stories of the foot-loose rebel, his symbol of revolt against bourgeois complacency, power, and tradition. His rebel breathed strength, pride of individuality unyielding even in defeat, and faith in the coming of another life for man. Gorky brought into literature a new romanticism, proletarian romanticism, a new passion for liberation. When the leading thinkers and writers about him took refuge in a romantic philosophy of escape and protest, celebrating spiritual isolation, beautiful resignation, pious liberalism, or melancholy exorcism, Gorky expressed his confidence in the creative force of thought, in the idea of progress, in the power of the mind to dominate the mighty forces inherent in the machine age and to shape life for noble human ends. He perceived the hidden beauty of mechanical power; he understood that science is a symbol of man's victorious upward struggle; but he also understood that the future demanded a heroic attitude to life on the part of man.]

And Gorky, in whom the disinherited proletariat became conscious, endowed his hero-rebel with his own burning indignation, with his own imperious demand for truth, freedom, and beauty in life. He dreamed to enrich the world with his power of rebellious daring, the "heroic madness" of the brave. He was a challenger calling to action—even unto death. He taught that the life worth living is the life that passes into a song, a legend, ringing as a trumpet and as a high tradition down the ages; that life is a great quest for truth and beauty, in its revealing substance. This was the manifesto of the spirit that he, as a proletarian writer, gave to the educated and the uneducated alike. For Gorky, the pivot of the universe is man as the carrier of a historic mission, a new pilgrim upon the earth, representing the social mass and their purposeful will. Unlike Bunyan's pilgrim, he is not absorbed with his own personal salvation and peace, not seeking a sweet haven for his own distracted soul. Gorky's man must achieve peace through the power of thought, through the unity of mind and heart, through a wholesome acceptance of the reality of the world, and through the intelligent, conscious will to cleanse life of all petty and unworthy ends, "All For Man, All Through Man."—THE TRANSLATOR.]

I.

IN THE moments of life when my spirit is weary,
When memory awakens the shadows of the past, and the heart
grows chill and burdened,

When like a passionless autumnal sun, thought faintly illumines
the chaos of the present, and remains dull and motionless
without the strength to rise,—

In the heavy hour of the spirit's great weariness, I summon before
me through the force of my imagination the sublime image
of Man.

MAN! I dream him as a new sun arisen in my soul, and I behold
him going forth in light onward and higher to nobler fame,
Unfathomed as the universe,
Tragic and vast in the beauty of life.

I BEHOLD him in his pride and majesty on his onward way,
Alone—alone forever;

I behold his deep and fearless eyes, and the light of world-enfold-
ing thought in their depths,—the bold and mighty power of
abstract thought which conceives the wonderful harmony of
the universe, which creates gods unto itself again and again
when the soul is faint with languor, and destroys them when,
resolute, it rises upon its dead self.

ALONE—alone forever,
An atom lost in endless space,
Alone upon a bit of earth borne with inconceivable speed into the
infinitude of space;

Tormented in his spirit by the yearning to know the first cause of
all and for what purpose he was made;

Man marches ever onward through the shroud of darkness,
Groping higher, to ever greater conquests over all the mysteries
of heaven and earth.

ALWAYS he marches onward as one anointed.
His blood as dew covers his proud, grievous, solitary way:
Out of his burning drops of blood spring the imperishable flowers
of poësy;
The sorrows and longings of his passionate spirit die and wake
again in strains of music;
Out of his experience, he rears the truths of science.

Ever onward and higher, a guiding star unto the earth, he is fashioning at every step life more beautiful, like a sun that invests the world in wonder and light.

ONWARD he marches—free, proud Man,
Far above the tumult of the crowd,
Alone within the mysteries of being,
Alone amidst the legions of his errors,
And his only armor is Thought—now quick as lightning, now keen
and cold as the sword.
The hosts of error oppress his mind, they rend his proud heart,
they gnaw at his brain, they chafe him with shame, and
they challenge him to rise up—and destroy them.

ONWARD! Within his breast passions seethe and rage:
Emotions and affections struggle within him, to have power and
dominion over his soul;
And selfishness, too, whines like an impudent beggar demanding
his dole; prejudices hold him in their bonds, suck his warm
blood and fiercely claim to be satisfied.

AND THE snares of petty cares of a day are as mire under his feet,
as loathsome toads in his path.

LIKE a sun in the company of its planets, so goes Man in the fellow-
ship of the creatures of his spirit.
Love goes at his side, insatiate ever; Friendship limps far behind;
before him goes weary-eyed Hope; Hate stalks, wrathful,
rattling the chains which suffering has put upon his hands;
Faith gazes into his rebellious face with her dark eyes, and
waits to embrace him, and give him peace.

He knows them who follow in his mournful train—how frail, how
deformed, how hideous, the creatures of his spirit!
Clothed in the tatters of ancient belief, foul with the bane of super-
stition, they come clamorous in the wake of Thought.
They come like ravens that beat a feeble wing after the eagle;
They come denying her birthright, in their hate, and rarely would

they unite with Thought in one creative flame all things enfolding and by all things enfolded.

THERE, too, goes the eternal companion of Man,—silent, mysterious Death, ever ready to touch with a kiss his burning heart athirst and panting for life.

HE knows them who follow in his immortal train. And one other he knows—Madness. Swift and terrible as the tempest she watches him with eyes of blind hatred, and fain would encompass him with her might and draw him after her in her frenzied dance.

THOUGHT alone is the faithful companion of Man.
Alone with her he walks in true fellowship;
By her light alone he beholds the stumbling-blocks in the way,—
the darkness, the secret places of nature, the shapeless chaos, and the gloom within his own heart.

THOUGHT alone is the free companion of Man, and her impartial, penetrating gaze sees into all things:

She perceives the craftiness of Love, how fierce her desire to possess without end, to make slavish and to become slavish in turn, to abase and to lust.

She knows how weak and fearful is Hope and her sister Deceit, painted and gaudy, ever ready all to console and all to deceive with mincing words.

She sees that the heart of Friendship is flabby with calculating prudence, with cruel inquisitiveness, and foul with the stains of envy and calumny.

She perceives also the dark power of Hate, and knows she would destroy everything on the earth, not sparing even the tender shoots of justice, if the fetters enchaining her were but loosened.

And in the unwavering face of Faith she beholds the evil craving of absolute power over the heart and mind of Man; she sees her hidden claws of tyrannical zeal; how impotent her heavy wings; she sees the blindness that lies within her empty eyes.

THOUGHT defies even Death to combat. She, sublime and immortal,—who had raised Man from the brute, created divinities and ideals, ways of wisdom, systems of philosophy, principles of science,—abhors a power so ruthless, so senseless, so fruitless.

For Death is like unto a ragman prowling in the narrow lanes after rubbish, who gathers into his filthy bag everything that is old, outworn and useless, and oftentimes steals things that are good and fair.

Foul with decay, hooded in black horror, uncompassionate, formless, mute, Death looms as a stern riddle before the face of Man, and Thought watches him jealously— radiant and life-giving Thought, sublime in the pride and knowledge of immortality.

THIS is the endless march of Man through the desolation and gloom of the unknown, onward and higher—ever onward! ever higher!

II.

BEHOLD Man has grown weary, he falters, he moans in his anguish; his terrified heart yearns for the consolation of Faith and the tender clemency of Love.

BORN of his weariness and defeat, three dark spirits—Melancholy, Despair, and Anguish—like monsters of the air hover over his soul;

They chant to him a dirge of the nothingness of Man, how limited the range and the scope of his knowledge, how feeble his thought, how absurd his inviolate greatness, how all things tend to their appointed end, and oblivion is his portion in life.

His tormented heart trembles in fear hearing their dirge so envenomed and mocking; doubts sting his brain; the tears of humiliation burn in his eyes.

AND WHEN rebellion is not in Man, the fear of Death will drive him imperiously into the prison of Faith; then Love, smiling

the smile of her triumph, will draw him with her caresses and the high promise of happiness, that would veil from his vision his impotence and his bondage unto desires.

And goaded by blind desires, Man will hasten to sate his heart and mind with the honeyed poison of carping Deceit who declares openly that self-gratification is the end of existence, and that the way of Man is no higher than the way of the brute in nature.

And in alliance with Deceit, timid Hope will whisper to him of the easeful bliss of peace and security, lull his languishing spirit with soft, beautiful words, and leave him in the quagmire of Sloth, in the clutch of its offspring Boredom.

BUT GREAT and exalted is Thought, and Man is her anointed!
She will challenge Deceit for the bitter combat.
And their battlefield is the very soul of Man.

THOUGHT, like an enemy, will follow and harass him;
Like a worm, she will gnaw forever at his brain;
Like a drought, she will lay waste his heart;
Like a hangman, she will torture him, and have no mercy, with infinite longings for truth, for stern wisdom, for knowledge that increases day by day as grows a fair, flaming blossom on the dark wastes of error.

BUT IF Deceit possess the soul of Man,
And if Man remain steadfast in the belief that earth holds no greater happiness than the pleasures of the flesh,
Nothing fairer than ease and the delight of the hour,
Then Thought will slumber with drooping wings, a prisoner unto Man's triumphant desires.
And Man will be alone, the prey of his vain heart.
Then vile Corruption, the offspring of loathsome Boredom, like a pestilent cloud will shroud as with dark, blighting dust the brain, the heart, the vision of Man.
And Man will lose his own self, transformed by his weariness into the brute, a stranger to Thought and greatness.

BUT IF divine indignation flame up in Man,
Thought will arouse itself,
And Man will go forth again on his onward march
On paths majestic,—
Alone upon the thorny way of his errors,
Alone with his consuming doubts,
Alone in the midst of the wreckage of ancient beliefs!

FREE, majestic, splendid in his pride, Man will gaze fearlessly into
the face of truth, and challenge all doubt:

"YE LIE unto me saying I am powerless, and my understanding is
limited! I know, see, feel, the growth of my spirit! By the
scope of my sufferings I know the growth of my spirit!

"WITH every step onward I aspire to greater goals beyond. I
feel more intensely, I see deeper and farther, and by my
aspirations I know that my understanding grows. Now it
is like a spark; it shall become like a flame. I shall be a
pillar of fire in the darkness of the world.

"IT IS my destiny to bring light into the world, to dissolve the dark-
ness of the unknown, to discover new harmony between
myself and the world of nature, in myself to create an inner
harmony, and to sweep all evil into the graves of the past
from the face of this mangled and all-enduring earth so
great with suffering, sorrow, hate, and injustice.

"IT IS my destiny to cut the coils of error and prejudice in which
mankind lies entangled, confused and dismayed,—a bleed-
ing, struggling mass of animals ready to devour one another.

"THOUGHT has willed me into being. Thought has endowed me
with power to overthrow and destroy all things old and
base, all things selfish and evil, and to rear a new life on the
imperishable foundations of freedom, beauty, and goodwill
unto all men.

"I HAVE come to bring death unto all human desires that are

pitiful, narrow and mean-spirited. I declare the worth and the wonder of man.

"SHAMEFUL, senseless and hateful is the order of life where the many must toil in unendurable slavery, that only the few may have their bread and the sweet gifts of the spirit.

"I CURSE the superstitions, the prejudices, the dead customs that have snared in their cobwebs the mind and life of men! They defile the world,—I will destroy them.

"THOUGHT is my weapon, and my unwavering faith in the freedom, power, and immortality of Thought is the abiding fountain of my strength.

"IN THE darkness of life, in the uttermost gloom of error, Thought alone is my true and steadfast beacon of light. I behold her beams burning ever brighter, piercing ever deeper the abyss of the unknown, and I march onward and higher in the light of immortal Thought.

"THOUGHT knows no unassailable strongholds, no places determined from the everlasting—not in heaven or on earth. Thought has called them into life, and Thought will destroy all things that exist as stumbling-blocks in her way, for this is her sacred and inalienable right.

"WELL I know, prejudices are but the fragments of ancient truths, the dust-clouds of error that hang over the earth, the blown ashes of old beliefs, to be consumed in the flames of Thought that once gave them life and meaning.

"WELL I know, they are not the conquerors who gather the fruits of victory, but they who remain in the battle of life resolute to conquer anew.

"WELL I know, creation alone is the meaning of life, and sufficient unto itself; that infinite is the creative power of Thought.

"ONWARD I march—to burn with a flame ever brighter, to throw my light before me deeper into the deepest darkness of life. And to lose my life, this is my gain and my reward.

"THERE is no other reward. Well I know, power is a base and wearisome possession; riches, senseless and oppressive; and fame, a superstition born of the weakness of men who would abase themselves, who would not perceive their own worth.

"OH MY doubts—sparks of Thought! In change and suffering she brings you forth, out of the abundance and profusion of her power, and she nourishes you with the same power as her own.

"AND IT will come to pass, the emotional impulses of my life will be joined together with immortal Thought in one wholeness—one mighty, sacred flame that will consume all that my soul contains of darkness, cruelty, and evil, and in this my joy of fulfillment I shall become as the gods.

"ALL FOR MAN! ALL THROUGH MAN!"

FREE and majestic, with head uplifted high,
Man is marching again steadily onward on the uncharted ways,
Onward over the dead ashes of superstition,
Alone within the grey mist of his errors,
Alone—alone forever.

The heavy clouds of the past are trailing behind him;
Before him are the legions of unknown mysteries awaiting in
calmness his coming, and they are without number, like
the stars in the immeasurable sky.

And without end in time and space is the way of Man.

THIS is the march of Man—onward, ever mounting higher!
Ever onward!
Ever higher!

by Bertram Morris

TOTALITARIAN CLOUDS

HUMAN VERSUS DICTATORIAL VALUES

WHEN in the *Clouds* Aristophanes portrays Socrates as a Sophist who for a given sum of money would teach a course in either good reason or in bad reason, he is perhaps not so wide of the mark as is usually thought. I seem to see there a trenchant irony, which perhaps only the penetrating satire of Aristophanes is able to transfix. Greek scholars, so far as I know, find the portrayal of Socrates incredible from an historical point of view. Socrates was not a Sophist; he did not teach for money; rather, it was he who founded that tradition which was opposed to the undermining of culture and knowledge, throwing men into the abyss of skepticism and anarchism. How then can we put any faith in the story about Strepsiades, the doltish old fellow who implores Socrates to give him the full curriculum on bad reason, that he may be clever enough to evade his just obligations in the courts? Is Aristophanes merely jesting, merely buffooning? Is he the idealist who perceives that the bad-reasoning curriculum leads to the downfall of parenthood, to the very destruction of Athenian life? Is he the idealist who perceives a genuine distinction between good and bad logos? Or finally, is he perhaps urging that just such a distinction ought to be observed in the Socratic teachings themselves?

Our present aim is to depict Plato's philosophy of the state in the light of Aristophanes' *Clouds*—if that is not a contradiction in terms. Plato is a philosopher, but he did live in an historical era—roughly, fourth century Athens. Nor does it appear that in writing his great utopia, *The Republic*, he is unaffected by the peculiar political conditions of his time. He carries on the tradition of answering the Sophists, begun by Socrates. These are radical fellows who believe that all knowledge and morality are private

affairs. The extreme position is expressed by the immortal dictum of Gorgias: "Nothing exists, even if something did exist, we couldn't know it; and even if we did know it, we couldn't communicate it." There is no doubt that these fellows were undermining the Greek tradition; for where knowledge and morality depend sheerly upon personal bias, there is no authority in the state. Consequently, their notions led to skepticism in theory and to anarchism in conduct. By temperament Plato could never have stomached such a confusion in the social order.

To get Plato in some historical perspective we must recognize a further condition. He is writing in the twilight of the Periclean Age, in the cool hour from on high. From this vantage-point, he can see the rise of Athens; its destiny as controlled by tiny aristocrats, who are finally to be bowled over by the surge of democracy; he can see both the glory of the Periclean Age, as well as the beginnings of its decay. Naturally, he cannot feel the same warmth and admiration for the democracy as had Thucydides, in his Pericles' Funeral Oration. 'Things look different in dawn and in twilight. And when one recognizes the abuses inherent in any system—such as false charges, graft, and the like—when one observes that a nation is becoming degenerate and effeminate through soft living, he must be wary of whole-hearted praise for any existing institution—especially when that institution is directed against aristocracy, of which Plato is an archmember.

Aristocrat Plato is, and the authoritarian state is the only one which can satisfy the temper of him who is looking for order and harmony—and specifically that kind of order and harmony which is patterned after one's own life. We may concretely trace out this idea in the *Republic*.

I.

In constructing a state—even if it is only an ideal state—it is well to secure the necessities of life. One which will not provide this much is unworthy of recognition. Plato's foresight in judiciously providing food, shelter, and clothing for the citizenry is admirable. Even the primitive state must allow for these, and they are no less essential in any state whatsoever—be it democracy, oligarchy, or even utopia. Since we must have goods, it

is well that they be produced efficiently, with the least possible disturbance. Plato understands the implications of efficiency better than most of us do today.

Efficient production means that a man cannot be a jack of all trades. He who would be farmer, carpenter, cobbler—all rolled in one—can do none of these jobs well. This necessary specialization is possible only through training. The good society is the trained society, and a trained society depends upon a complex educational scheme. But efficient production implies something more: it implies that one must be trained with reference to his natural abilities. To make a poor lawyer out of a good farmer, or a poor farmer out of a good lawyer is an economic waste. We must, therefore, devise some method to determine the best job for which any man is suited, and to determine this scientifically.

Rudimentary specialization is needed even in the primitive state. In the luxuriant City-State—such as Athens—the degree of specialization is almost illimitable. If we make Athens a perfect society, then we have the ideal of all states whatsoever—for all times and all places.

Such a state comprises three classes of people: the artisans, the warriors, and the guardians, each with its own proper function and its own specific virtue. The artisans are the producers; the warriors the defenders; and the guardians the rulers. And the virtues which belong to them are temperance, courage, and wisdom, in order, corresponding to the three different psychological functions, appetite, spirit, and reason. The principle of division and their respective virtues can be found either in the city-state or in the individual soul.

Plato asks the question, What is the best soul? He answers, That soul which is internally harmonious. Or, more specifically, that which is ruled by reason. Where spirit follows the dictates of passions, instead of reason, the soul is divided against itself and man becomes his own worst enemy. It is like the charioteer, as he tells us in the *Phaedrus*, trying to keep under control his two horses, the one, a white, noble steed; the other, a black, lumbering, jaded nag. The black is the passionate soul, seeking gratification of each and every appetite. The white is the spirited soul, which, though obeying the merest pressure on the reins, is likely to be

unruly in the presence of temptation. Since, however, the white steed is sensitive to the word of wisdom, it may aid the charioteer in curbing the other, and stands as an example of uprightness and virtue to the nag, finally brought to shame. The struggle is hard and the soul perspires throughout the ordeal, but only in such fashion can harmony and order prevail.

Precisely as the just soul is the harmonious soul, with reason at the reins, so the just state is the harmonious state—that is, the soul writ large. Justice is the proper balance of functions. Plato is not denying the appetites; he is simply denying indulgence. Some desires are necessary, precisely as the artisan class is necessary. He insists only that desires be curbed; that artisans be temperate. Spirit is necessary, but it must be moderated; otherwise there is no courageous body of soldiers for defense. But both classes must respect their superior—the guardian, who possesses the virtue of wisdom. When each class performs its office, then justice comes into being. What is fatal to society is the meddling of one class with the functions of another. It is these busybodies that Plato loathes and despises. It is they who interfere with the smooth working of society. It is they who bring about discord and strife. When a farmer rules, or when a ruler farms, that is the sign of the collapse of the state.

Plato is uncompromising in his hatred of democracy—that form of government which has been called “essentially a process of muddling through”, where there is no order, no security, no symmetry. Representative government is a contradiction in terms. The theory of consent of the governed is so much nonsense. In the *Statesman* Plato likens government to the art of medicine. The doctor does not ask his patient what he wants; he tells him what is good for him. All of this, of course, on the basis of superior knowledge. So in government, the guardian does not ask for consent, nor does he canvass the wishes of the governed. He simply governs. Though Plato does not explicitly carry the analogy to its logical conclusion, nevertheless the implication is there that the body-politic is a sick people to be dosed by the philosopher-king.

There is, however, a suggestion here which we might take seriously—namely, that the philosopher-king has authority by reason

of his superior knowledge. Knowledge is power, and is the sole basis of any genuine, undogmatic authority. Plato's unflagging insistence is that government must be a science. Only then can we counteract those destructive forces which are at work in the subversion of Athens. Only then can we give the answer to both democrat and sophist.

This ideal of political science accounts for Plato's inordinate amount of discussion devoted to education. If there is to be an efficient society, it must rest in the hands of highly trained specialists. His proposal for early education is simple in outline. It consists of gymnastics to harden the soul, and of music to temper it. He definitely subordinates physical well-being to spiritual well-being, as the latter alone can be considered an end in itself, an intrinsic value.

The higher education is more elaborate. It emphasizes mathematics throughout, as the basis and ideal of all scientific explanation; then applied mathematics in the form of physics, astronomy, and harmonics; and finally, the highest subject of all, dialectic, in which the student finds himself dealing with pure Ideas, and especially the Idea of the Good, the ultimate explanatory principle of all things whatsoever. He who is quick-witted, of an even temper and gracious character—never once yielding to temptation—becomes the guardian of the state. He rules not by opinion but by knowledge. Such is the philosopher-king, who alone is qualified to direct the destinies of the State.

The state is absolute, ruled by an incontrovertible order in which every individual falls into his proper place. Once this ideal state is established, there is no further justification for the annoying objections which made the sophists a source of irritating disgust. Having set up a perfectly planned society, Plato is honest enough to draw out the implications with ruthless logic: abolition of the family, communism, feminism, and censorship.

So far as the guardians are concerned there is to be no such thing as the family, because it makes for divided loyalty, and is not for the welfare of the state. Women and children are to be had in common, under the guidance of some sort of Director of Domestic Relations. Plato is no advocate of promiscuity; rather, he is an ascetic, who is thinking of the superior value of the state.

When he has no family ties, the guardian will be a better ruler.

Likewise, with property. Private property is the root of all social evil. It makes for that littleness of nature in which a man thinks more of his goods than of the well-being of his fellow men. So the ingenious Plato thinks up a fable to tell these people. He says we shall tell them that they have no need for earthly goods; gold and silver are given them by the gods. These are diviner elements, which they possess within their breasts, and thus they should ignore the dross which is current among men. It is to this inner gold and silver that they should look, not to unreal, material things. Except for bare essentials, private property is dispensed with, and the guardians live in common.

The ingenious Plato is also the resourceful Plato. He tackles the problem of assigning the proper place to women. We should hardly expect a man of Plato's cast of mind to sound the cry of equal rights—that is appropriate to a democracy, not to an aristocracy. He does, however, specifically mention that where women are qualified they shall not be discriminated against: they may become guardians, or, if fitted for the task, they may even ride out on the battle-field. Surely he is not recognizing equal rights for women—Plato, the philosopher, living in a society of men, where woman's place is definitely in the household; woman, a creature who is not even permitted to go on the streets alone, except by the express authority of her husband. It hardly seems plausible. Professor G. H. Sabine has suggested that Plato is here a realist, an economic soul, who recognizes that women do not have a fulltime job. That is an economic waste and should be rectified. So interpreted, Plato sounds like the consistent realist he is.

Finally, the knotty problem of censorship. All lewd and lascivious art must be banned from the Republic. Where such art exists it caters to the lower soul, to the appetites, undermining the very foundations of society. Art and literature must be handmaidens of the state, as their only justification lies in their social function. Thus we may imbue the citizenry with noble ideals by singing the praises of warriors or of the heroes which have passed away; or we may invoke the praises of the gods, but never are we to tolerate any form of art which arouses carnal desires. Homer

must be censored, for there are passages in which he mocks the gods. Anything which is sacrilegious, which encourages the baser impulses, thus subverting morality, must be banned from the state.

Plato is at least consistent. Given the state, and by definition a good state, then anything which is subversive to it must be bad. Private property, the family, art—these must all be subjected to the acid test as to whether they contribute to the good of the state. For intrinsic value belongs not to these things in themselves, but only to the social organism. Anti-social desires are *ipso facto* evil, and anything which smacks of anarchism or individualism must be suppressed.

When Plato is thinking of the means of perpetuating such a society, he is no less consistent. To perpetuate the aristocracy we need only go back to the principles of eugenics. The fancier of hunting-dogs breeds them from the best stock; the fancier of the state similarly breeds his rulers from the best stock. The analogy of breeding people like dogs may shock our sensibilities, yet it is precisely what is demanded by Plato's social philosophy.

There is no doubt that Plato is the apostle of authority. Is it not the only way in which the sophists may be silenced? Is it not the only way in which unordered democracy can be molded into ordered aristocracy? Plato has constructed a society in his own image, that of an aristocrat. It is obviously not a livable society for anyone other than the philosopher-king, who has at his service the artisans, to produce goods for him and who will at the same time live temperately, thus creating no social problems for him. And he has at his service the warriors, who will fight his battles for him and protect him, and who will at the same time live both bravely and temperately, still creating no social problems for him. But there is a flaw in such a society, for the artisan will ask, Why should I be temperate? and the warrior will ask, Why should I be brave and temperate? Plato refers these questions not to his own being, but to the Idea of the Good, whose ineffable authority is supposed to awe all malcontents. Having put value in the state alone, he sidesteps all the troublesome issues which bother us today. Freedom and liberty have no significance, except as one is a member of the state. In it alone can he find his salvation. He must, therefore, contribute to its good, regardless

of what his own ideas of freedom and liberty may be. The compulsion comes from without, and so far I as can see, Plato has never made good his basic dogma that the good of the state is the good of the individual. The state might perfectly well prosper, while the individual lives in misery. Freedom is a word which stands for the authority of the state, and having as the symbol of this authority, the philosopher-king.

I have tried to draw the lines sharp, and perhaps they are over-sharp. Plato is more than a political philosopher, and I have no desire to belittle his genius. But sentimentalizing never solves political issues, and it is well to recognize what Plato stands for: how he makes the state primary, and how, as a result, the individual is swallowed up in a huge organism, thus losing his identity. For my own part, I seem to see more sense to the position of the sophists, and I wonder whether Socrates is not guilty of Aristophanes' charge of using the bad logos, instead of the good.

II.

With the *Republic* as springboard, we may plunge into the waters of modern political theory. We can perceive the same issues reappearing, though in a different context. In modern theory it is Hobbes that is bequeathed the task of carrying on the authoritarian tradition.

Hobbes, like Plato, is troubled only with the necessity of how to get a lasting, secure form of government. That value which both appraise above all is peace and security. They show themselves to be not very robust personalities who care to enter the fray of political issues, but rather weary-worn, conservative creatures who prefer to set up absolute sovereignties, that an unalterable order might prevail. Hobbes' familiar picture of man in a state of nature vividly rejects meaning to the notion of right, except in the sense of the law of the jungle that might makes right, where life is "solitary, nasty, mean, brutish, and short." Man lives in continual fear of the elements as well as in fear of attacks on his person both by other men and by wild animals. There is no certainty in such a life, and man's chief task is that of self-preservation. It is a war of all against all, with no opportunity for

furthering cultural values. *Homo sapiens* is no better off than beast. Thus Hobbes characterizes the pre-political era.

There comes the time—though it is not necessarily an actual historical event—when men meet together to form the social contract, and so to make social life possible. Each gives up all claims to rights, in virtue of every other doing the same, and together they invest a sovereign with supreme authority. The sovereign, however, does not enter into the contract; the contracting parties are the people themselves, and for their mutual benefit they repudiate all their rights, in favor of an impartial monarch. Nor do the people ever have the prerogative of resisting their monarch, as that would lead them back directly to nature, in which the grim warfare would recommence.

The state may commit what Hobbes calls iniquities; never injustices. The solution is a verbal one, but perhaps no more verbal than the whole historical fiction of a state of nature, the creation of that artificial monster, the Leviathan, and man's complete subservience to it. But what is not merely verbal is his conception of the function of the state, as that supreme order in which man can find his only peace and trust on this earth. Where one takes this to be life's ultimate value, there is no sacrifice too great to bring it into being. Where order and harmony are considered to be the final goal of life, then, as both Hobbes and Plato see, the state must be grounded in absolute, immutable principle—be that in the will of an irrevocable monarch or in an uncreated, indestructible, eternal Idea of the Good.

Rousseau has, in fact, accomplished the same feat. Starting out with a democratic feeling that real human values belong only to the peasants—and assuredly not to the scholars and intelligentsia—he ends by overruling all human feelings whatsoever. "Man is born free and is everywhere found in chains." The reason for his bondage is to be found in society itself. The proposal for his release is in a direct form of democratic government—a reinstatement of the demos. This at least sounds like a true form of democracy, until Rousseau draws a distinction between the "will of all" and the "general will". Even unanimous consent as to what people want is no real ground for authority, for their will may be and should be overridden, if it is not for their genuine good. Here

a superior authority supervenes as the ground of all legislation, whether they will it or not. It is difficult to make sense out of Rousseau's general will, except that it is in principle a reinterpretation of the authoritarian tradition.

The tradition is carried into contemporary political philosophy by the neo-Hegelians. Significant as their contributions are, still the essence of their points of view may be found in Plato.

The answer to the sophists has been given. But has it? Though perhaps our present-day sophists are less keen in recognizing and expressing the real problem, today we still have the sophists in the guise of individualists, except that few of them profess to be out and out radicals and anarchists.

This tradition comes down to us in its most familiar form through John Locke and Thomas Jefferson. Locke writes his *Two Treatises on Civil Government* as a justification of the Revolution of 1688. Jefferson is writing in the light of the American Revolution. They appear to be individualists at heart, opposed to the imposition of external authority, where it is neither needed nor welcome. "That state governs best which governs least." The logical outcome of which seems to be: "That state governs best which governs not at all."

Locke is writing for an agrarian society, where socialization is least likely to succeed, and where the principle of governmental noninterference or a policy of "hands off" is most applicable. From our point of vantage we can see how it easily develops into the economic policy of laissez-faire, with its insistence upon immunities for the individual. Locke proposes a theory of natural rights which guarantees the protection of life, liberty, and property. The contrast to the classic tradition is striking. Government must keep out of political affairs as much as possible. It intervenes only when necessary—and as many would have us believe today, that is never.

To Locke considerations of the particular form of government are definitely subordinate to the wishes of the people, for the individual is the ultimate source of authority. In terms of the doctrine familiar to the American ear: "Governments receive their just powers from the consent of the governed." Consent can be

given meaning, where we signify by it individual consent. Otherwise, it apparently has little or no significance. Logically, we are reduced to a theory of pure individualism, and this is nothing more nor less than anarchism.

The issue from a philosophical point of view seems to be this: where is the locus of value, in the state or in the individual? If the state alone possesses value, that is, if the individual can find his salvation and being, his freedom and his realization, only in the social organism, then should we not attribute intrinsic value to it and to it alone? For the state is really the embodiment of the perfected individual. Or is the locus of value in the individual mind, in the fulfillment of his own hopes and aspirations? Then the state and its authority can be considered at best a necessary evil. Where it becomes intolerably harsh and restricting, there is where we should put an end to it.

III.

The problem is no mere academic one. It is before us today, and in a virulent form. Soviet and fascistic governments (though we must distinguish the two in terms of purpose) make the state supreme. They are authoritarian, and narrowly so, but perhaps not unduly so in comparison with the *Republic*. They make use of the censorship which Plato long ago formulated for any kind of dictatorship. It is the first lesson which any dictator must learn. The evils of such a state are apparent to us today, and perhaps so apparent that we tend to deny it any positive value. We take exception to collectivity or regimentation, precisely because it means the frustration of all that we cherish in life. Certainly Bergson has laid bare the fallacy of considering life as identical with intellectual constructs. And as Professor Carl Becker has pointed out, there is something malodorous in a social ideology which insists upon revolutionizing existing institutions, but which fails to apply it to the establishing of a new order. Except for a moribund state no strict form or mold can satisfy the requirements of a living and breathing people.

But these molds and class-partisanship are equally rampant in our so-called democracies. The theory of rugged individualism

seems to be scarcely more than a euphemism for a kind of tyranny which is no less vicious. Is it a mere coincidence that those who profess themselves to be rugged individualists are those who have already obtained their material goods, who have amassed their fortunes, and who now want to make certain that they shall be secured? It is the preceding generation of radicals who finally become conservatives, and then disguising their class relations become individualists. Thus, when either tradition becomes crystallized into forms of class society, it is more than repugnant.

The classic statement of the problem between authority and individual freedom makes it insoluble. Since the issue never meets head on, the two traditions pass each other without interlocking on a common mat. Both are guilty of dogmatic assertions, which keep the disputants at a respectable distance, guaranteeing philosophical smugness and self-complacency. If we were to explain this professional snobbishness we should no doubt find that the error lies in the inveterate laxness of political theorists in couching their idea in sterile fictions. The idealist fatuously calls the state a person or a social organism, concealing the real facts by using some such term as the social contract. The political anarchist, with equal fatuity, hides under the cloak of such notions as "consent of the governed" and the doctrine of "natural and inalienable rights". Perhaps both are asserting something, yet something so inchoate as to be either obvious or false. Perhaps the genuine significance of idealism is simply that man is a trans-individual being—that his humanistic and cultural attainments extend beyond his own self-encased person. This fact, so obvious, is so likely to be ignored. In his *Three Philosophical Poets*, pp. 118-120, Santayana strikes the key-note in his interpretation of Dante's treatment of the punishment of Paolo and Francesca da Rimini. The quotation is worth setting forth at length:

What makes these lovers so wretched in the Inferno? They are still together. Can an eternity of floating on the wind, in each other's arms, be a punishment for lovers? That is just what their passion, if left to speak for itself, would have chosen. It is what passion stops at, and would gladly prolong for ever. Divine judgment has only taken it at its word. This fate is precisely what Aucassin, in the well-known tale, wishes for himself and his sweetheart Nicolette,

—not a heaven to be won by renunciation, but the possession, even if it be in hell, of what he loves and fancies. And a great romantic poet, Alfred de Musset, actually upbraids Dante for not seeing that such an eternal destiny as he has assigned to Paolo and Francesca would be not the ruin of their love, but the perfect fulfillment of it. This last seems to be very true; but did Dante overlook the truth of it? If so, what instinct guided him to choose just the fate for these lovers that they would have chosen for themselves?

There is a great difference between the apprentices in life and the masters,—Aucassin and Alfred de Musset were among the apprentices; Dante was one of the masters. He could feel the fresh promptings of life as keenly as any youngster, or any romanticist; but he had lived these things through, he knew the possible and the impossible issue of them; he saw their relation to the rest of human nature, and to the ideal of an ultimate happiness and peace. He had discovered the necessity of saying continually to oneself: Thou shalt renounce. And for this reason he needed no other furniture for hell than the literal ideals and fulfillments of our absolute little passions. The soul that is possessed by any one of these passions nevertheless has other hopes in abeyance. Love itself dreams of more than mere possession; to conceive happiness, it must conceive a life to be shared in a varied world, full of events and activities, which shall be new and ideal bonds between the lovers. But unlawful love cannot pass out into this public fulfillment. It is condemned to be mere possession—possession in the dark, without an environment, without a future. It is love among the ruins. And it is precisely this that is the torment of Paolo and Francesca—love among the ruins of themselves and of all else they might have had to give to one another. Abandon yourself, altogether to a love that is nothing but love, and you are in hell already.

Dante resounds the vibrant note of the idealist's positive contribution: man's self-imposed hell is nothing other than his limited existence taken for the real. Let man satisfy his petty cravings, let him live for them alone, and no more abysmal torment is conceivable. However deep-seated a desire, man is something more than that. Diogenes in the tub, Diogenes who refuses to drink from a cup, because dogs don't drink from cups, is a ludicrous caricature, and precisely because expression cannot find its fulfillment without such bounds. Human nature carries us beyond this arbitrarily imposed environment.

But the idealist overreaches himself. The fulfilment of human nature is not society. When he makes an absolute of society—even though it be idealized—then theory is purely speculative, and of questionable value for human beings. To live *sub specie aeternitatis* is to negate life as we know it. It can be of no earthly value in political theory, except as spelling the universal denial of all but the absolute.

It is at this point where individualism steps in as a sobering influence in restricting theory to the intelligible, to the effable. It is this sobering influence which makes us recognize that theory must not be sundered from experience. It is this sobering influence which makes us conscious that if value belongs to the absolute alone, the individual has lost his identity, never again to regain it.

IV.

To see the difficulties inherent in any system is far easier than to assess it. An *impasse* exists between the two traditions. To decide between them requires a preference, bold but not logically justifiable. Sympathetic appraisal is difficult, if not impossible. What seems to be necessitated is a new start. For until we overhaul our political concepts, dispassionately analyzing them, we can expect nothing but confusion in political philosophy. Argument by analogy indicates the adolescent stage of any science, and is more likely to close inquiry than to permit its mature development.

The newer trend in the philosophy of the state tries to rid the subject of purely honorific terms, and to recognize that "individual" and "state" are not static entities, but growing, developing instrumentalities, and, if at all fertile, they must be taken in specific empirical contexts. Otherwise, abstract notions give pretty solutions to our current problems, but satisfactory only to the idealistic logician. As John Dewey puts it in his *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, p. 191:

... the tendency of the organic point of view is to minimize the significance of specific conflicts. Since the individual and the state or social institution are but two sides of the same reality, since they are already reconciled in principle and conception, the conflict in any particular case can be but apparent ... Capital and labor cannot 'really' conflict because

each is an organic necessity to the other, and both to the organized community as a whole. There cannot 'really' be any sex-problem because men and women are indispensable both to one another and to the state.

Dewey, as well as others who are not instrumentalists, have suggested that a more fruitful procedure is possible where we lodge our problems in terms of interests, rather than in terms of either organic social relations or of isolated individual entities. Interests are more or less specific and identifiable; permitting of empirical solutions in historico-political situations, and not determined from on high.

When problems are put in an historical perspective, it is then possible to point to those interests which are harmoniously related and to those which conflict. Perhaps then we can work out of that utterly confused field of rights and duties. Instead of concealing political and social issues under the verbiage of natural rights or social welfare, they can be brought out for critical scrutiny. Where there is no clash of interests, rights and duties have no meaning, except for the authoritarian who would preach the gospel of puritanical asceticism. The theory of interests is not arbitrarily imposed from without, but depends solely on the recognition of values. Nor is this a scheme of things which makes imagination unnecessary. On the contrary, it puts a premium on it. The theory need not be dogmatic, nor does it rest upon class-partisanship, but simply upon self-recognized interests—all of which are in some sense individual and in some sense extra-individual, whether it be in the use of cosmetics or of public libraries. As Justice Cardozo has written, the legal mechanism for discriminating the uses to which private property may be put as in the enforcing of zoning laws, nuisance laws, and the like is not for its confiscation but for its preservation. Such a notion makes the moral order and the perfected legal order not at all different. In fact, it is this humanistic moral order which provides the ground for the development of the legal order. Certainly such a theory deserves recognition.

From our survey, this point seems to stand out in relief: political philosophy, more than any other discipline, must take account of human values which can be enjoyed. A political philoso-

phy which countenances the burning of books, a censorship arbitrarily imposed, the suppression of the development of interests, through governmental action or inaction, cannot satisfy. As Aristophanes suggests, we must distinguish between good reason and bad; we must exclude sophistry as well as authoritarianism, and we must approach our human and cultural development in the light of good reason and imagination, for the two cannot ultimately be sundered.

by James Still

HOUNDS ON THE MOUNTAIN

Slow the dull fulcrum, slow the arched leanings
Of hill on hill and witless lifting of stark eyes
To craven stone: White the wet lattice of morning
Over dusty drums, and keen the agony of dry roots
Questing beneath the earth.

Lean as brown straws
The hounds of day tread out thickets of darkness,
Damp the grasses their bodies have brushed in passing
Thinner than fly-wings, heavier than words in a cavern,
Wilder than thoughts creaming the tongue unspoken.

Hounds on the mountain . . .
Grey and swift spinning the quarry shall turn
At the cove's ending, at the slow day's breaking
And lave the violent shadows with her blood.

by *Elsbeth Bragdon*

I LEAVE THEM ALL

This is my testament, unbreakable:

I, in sound mind—

(The quick thought keen and eager like a bird)

I, in sound body—

(The sun upon my skin, the wind upon my face)

Must leave these places whose bright praise

I have not spoken.

To God I leave the hollow between mountains

Where green is deep; where I have seen

A rabbit of cool shadow point his ears

And nibble at the crests of twelve-foot pines.

To God I leave the unhurried curves I love so well

I hold them in my hand:

The mountain-elephant, knee-deep in meadow grass;

The ragged granite fin of stony whale

That pushes its dark nose into the sea.

To God I leave the islands, like flung coins,

With circles from their shores

Where waves have come

And go again upon the ebbing tide.

I leave Him coves and ledges,

And the great split cleft between long hills

Where creeps the sea,

Where lies the ghostly shadow of a ship

Too burdened with its cargo to go free.

I leave Him winds I have known well and long:
The south wind bellied by the feel of rain,
The east wind sodden with grey fog,
And the north wind . . .
Oh with what bitterness I leave this wind to God!
Its towers of white cloud
Full-blown like sails upon a ship.

This leaving is not easy, for the heart
Is envious and hungry to the last.
Grudging, reluctant, I give them up:
The village, swinging in a sea of stars,
The long green fingers from the north,
The slow unwieldy mass that is the milky way.
The sea . . .
The sea . . .
They can belong to children and to lovers
For a while,
These vast imponderables,
But in due time they break the human heart.

To God,
Who must unclench the stubborn fist,
I leave them all.

by Frances W. Knickerbocker

VICTORIA INVICTA

A hundred years have passed since that June morning of 1837, when an eighteen year old girl in dressing-gown and bedroom slippers walked alone for the first time down the stairs of Kensington Palace to hear that she was Queen of England. And if Victoria could return to us today, she could read that scene depicted by her latest biographer or see it played before delighted audiences. In an age that has repudiated everything Victorian, she would find herself our favorite heroine.

Probably she would not be surprised. For in her long reign she lived through strange changes of opinion. The first great wave of popular enthusiasm for the innocent girl-queen who had replaced the wicked uncles was turned in two years to antagonism of the aristocracy by her unwise treatment of the Tories and to indignation at the Hastings scandal. Once more, the loyalty that had grown through the happy dutiful years of her married life was quenched by her long seclusion after Albert's death. A shrewd American, writing from England in 1866, reported the chorus of complaint from all classes at the stagnation in society and trade caused by her retirement. "It more than surprises us Americans, it hurts us, to discover that among her own people she can be the subject of jibes, of sneers, even of rather disagreeable tittle-tattle". This smouldering discontent burst in the early seventies into open attacks on the Monarchy. The Queen felt herself "a cruelly misunderstood woman". But republicanism died in the sympathy called out by the critical illness of the Prince of Wales. Hostility was transformed into the devotion that flamed in her triumphant Jubilee and glorified her last years.

Men thought of Victoria, wrote Chesterton the year after her death, "as one who was a good Queen, and who would have been, had her fate demanded, with equal cheerfulness, a good washer-

woman. Herein lay her unexampled triumph, the greatest and perhaps the last triumph of monarchy". But one later triumph has been hers: she has survived the anti-Victorian reaction; she has conquered Lytton Strachey.

And it is Victoria the woman who has won us. For through her now published letters and journals we know her today as her contemporaries could not. In the direct, childlike style, the eager exclamations, the peremptory underlinings, we discover a personality apparently so simple, yet so strangely fascinating.

Lives of Victoria there had been before Strachey. Some, like Sir Sidney Lee's, were stately and commemorative; more were drippingly worshipful. One, for instance, described Victoria's expression of the words "love, cherish, and obey" at her wedding and "the confiding look with which they were accompanied" as "inimitably chaste and beautiful"; and recited how Albert held Victoria's hand after the wedding "in such a way as to leave the wedding ring visible to the assembled crowd".

There lies beside me a priceless "Memorial Volume", published by the World Bible House of Philadelphia in 1901. The title page reads—in part:

LIFE AND TIMES OF QUEEN VICTORIA
CONTAINING A
FULL ACCOUNT OF THE MOST ILLUSTRIOUS REIGN OF ANY
SOVEREIGN IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD.
INCLUDING THE
EARLY LIFE OF VICTORIA; HER ACCESSION TO THE THRONE
AND CORONATION
MARRIAGE TO PRINCE ALBERT; GREAT EVENTS DURING HER BRILLIANT
REIGN; PERSONAL TRAITS AND CHARACTERISTICS THAT
ENDEARED HER TO HER PEOPLE.
GRAPHIC DESCRIPTION OF HER CHARMING HOME LIFE; NOBLE
QUALITIES AS WIFE AND MOTHER; ROYAL CASTLES; PUBLIC
RECEPTIONS; WONDERFUL GROWTH OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE, ETC.
EMBELISHED WITH MORE THAN 100 SUPERB ENGRAVINGS OF
HISTORIC SCENES, PORTRAITS, ETC.

"Embellished" truly describes not only the delicious engravings, of royalty breakfasting in the open air, bidding farewell to the Scots Guards, laying cornerstones, "etc.", but the beflowered style of the text. A typical sentence from the Preface declares:

"She was the queen of her home and domestic circle, and the jewels of her crown were not brighter than the virtues that adorned her character and endeared her to her people".

Reluctantly I forebear to quote from the "graphic descriptions" of the last hours of the Prince Consort and the Queen herself. But I cannot resist this incident of the first months of her widowhood at Osborne: "The Queen would go each morning", her half-sister told Dean Stanley, "to visit the cows on the Prince's model farm, because he used to do it, and she fancied the gentle creatures would miss him".

It is a pity that Strachey did not know about those cows.

Victorianism, says Mr. Harold Nicolson, died only in 1921—the year of Strachey's *Queen Victoria*. Yet the very masterpiece that ended an era revived its heroine, unwinding from her little figure the woolly wrappings of reverence and decorum. There is no need to praise the artistic skill and ironic detachment that have shaped the crowded background of persons and events around that small, dominating figure; nor to analyze again that too much imitated, yet inimitable style, of imagery and long drawn cadence, of contrast and anti-climax. ("She would not lose one memory or one pin".) What matters here is that this figure, so cunningly wrought, came Galatea-like to life in a way perhaps unforeseen by her creator. That simple character that Strachey seemed to hold in his hand, "a small smooth crystal pebble, without flaw and without a scintillation, and so transparent that one can see through it at a glance", revealed under his searching eye curious veins and unexpected depths. Here was a strange mingling of stubborn prejudice and keen wisdom, of hard self-will and warm tenderness. And from these interacting complexities of heredity and temperament moulded by love and grief and time there emerged for him and us a personality of compelling power. The sheer goodness which her people prized (then as now) above all other qualities pierced through the haze that surrounds royalty. Instinctively they responded to the irresistible sincerity "which gave her at once her impressiveness, her charm, and her absurdity". One suspects that it was the absurdity that first attracted Strachey. But in the gentle benignity of the aged Queen he found a fas-

cination lacking even in the vivid impulse of her youth. And in the end it was the charm that won him.

II.

From reverence to contempt is but a single swing of the pendulum of opinion. It was inevitable that the post-war generation should turn in bitterness against the fathers and grandfathers who left to them the heritage of catastrophe. In the outburst of debunkery that followed the appearance of *Eminent Victorians* in 1918, the Queen was involved with the age. Again, as in her lifetime, she might have felt herself cruelly misunderstood. For the lesser followers of Strachey could imitate his defects but not his genius; they could ape his mockery but not his penetration or his art. And so they read his *Queen Victoria*, revelling in the absurdities: those never-to-be-forgotten descriptions of the furnishings of Balmoral and the sculptures of the Albert Memorial; but ignoring his real achievement, the portrait of a great personality.

Contempt is a very easy attitude; it is also a little shallow. Amid the stuffiness of the Victorian setting, its curios and what-nots and antimacassars, some of us began to discern the stature of Victorian character. As that keen analyst of Victorian earnestness, Mr. Esmé Wingfield-Stratford, has observed: "Cruelly as the Victorians have suffered from their biographers, we can place to their credit one enormous, though implied, admission, namely that they are eminently worth biographising"—which, he adds, is more than can be said of most of their descendants. In these last years contempt has gradually given place to an interest, amused and slightly condescending, to be sure, but distinctly sympathetic: an interest variously expressed in the recent flood of novels and plays of the period and in the revival of black walnut chairs and leg-o'-mutton sleeves.

And so the nineteen-thirties have brought a return of, or to, Victoria herself. For if we can come closer to Victoria than Strachey could, that is partly because we no longer look down on her from distant heights, and partly because her later letters, unpublished when he wrote, have told us more about her. It is, then, to show Victoria as we see her now that Mr. E. F. Benson, genial

chronicler of our yesterdays, followed his *Edward VII* by *Queen Victoria* (1935). His is a straightforward narrative, told with the practised novelist's easy mastery of detail. At times it is even a little matter-of-fact. Perhaps his long immersion in the Queen's letters has subdued his own style to something of the royal plainness. Or perhaps he deliberately avoided a dramatic rendering of the crucial scenes that would challenge comparison with Strachey's vivid re-creation. At any rate, his account of the arrival of Albert, for instance, is dull-toned indeed compared with:

"Albert arrived; and the whole structure of her existence crumbled into nothingness like a house of cards. He was beautiful—she gasped—she knew no more. Then, in a flash, the delusions of years were abolished, and an extraordinary, an irresistible certitude leapt into being in the light of those blue eyes, the smile of that lovely mouth".

But we should be grateful to Mr. Benson for refusing either to imitate the Stracheyan manner or to abuse the tricks of his own novelist's trade; for giving us neither the ironic stereotype nor the fictionized invention. His tone, even when he must point out some "questionable manoeuvres" in Victoria's dealings with her ministers and generals, is always kind. It takes on a quiet humor in his descriptions of the Duchess of Kent treating her little daughter like a class in school, seeing "that it ate its everlasting mutton with propriety"; or of Albert's vain attempts to leaven with intelligent guests and improving conversation "the rather doughy evenings" at Windsor. Quietly, too, almost casually, Mr. Benson produces the evidence from the Queen's own letters that corrects some of Strachey's assumptions. The influence of Stockmar over Victoria and Albert was not really, he shows, prodigious; and in the famous interview of the aged Queen with Bismarck, it was the Queen who was the formidable one. Indeed, it is these last letters that reveal Victoria in all her glory. As Mr. Benson remarks of her masterly letter to her grandson the Kaiser on his outrageous telegram to President Kruger: "Nobody except that superb matriarch could have flattened out William with anything like her success".

If Strachey's picture of Queen Victoria has the bold and brilliant technique of a Sargent portrait, Mr. Benson's has the homely reality of a faithful photograph. He shows us a very honest and

capable young woman with great common sense but almost no sensitiveness, with a sincere and simple faith. "Neither ecstasy nor doubt ever troubled her". He sees that it was the loneliness of her childhood and the domination of her mother that drove her in upon herself and wrought in her an inflexible self-will, a vein of iron. He sees her as girl and woman, now torn by adolescent disquiets, now routing Sir Robert Peel with the weapons of her sex; soon "the passionate wooer of her consenting mate", the adoring wife. And at last, emerging from the long desolation of her widowhood, she drew from the dear memory a spring of renewed vitality and faced her last years with enriched experience, a child-like simplicity and an indomitable courage.

It is an attractive, a convincing picture. But somehow a close-up is less memorable than a portrait. Mr. Benson has seen Victoria plain, without ridicule and without wonder. Because she has not stirred him deeply, he cannot stir us. It is Strachey, deeply moved in spite of himself by the brave benignity of Victoria, who has made her memorable in her absurdity—and her charm.

Without her beloved Consort, Victoria would never have consented to return to us. In her lifetime she had labored to make her countrymen share her own unquestioning devotion to him; nothing so stirred her indignation as attacks on him; and as she looked at him lying dead she had exclaimed, "Will they do justice to him now?" And so she would, I think, be glad to know that at last, though in ways so different from hers, we have done him justice.

Indeed, it was Strachey who rescued Albert from that fatal stigma—from wearing forever the white flower of a blameless life. Behind that image of perfection, those frigid statues that look down upon the public places of England, Strachey discerned the man, gentle yet severe, lonely yet proud, longing for sympathy yet reserved. Others have carried on his rehabilitation; Mr. Benson has even dared suggest that Albert's taste in art was better than the decorations of Osborne or the Albert Memorial! It is true that from all the biographies of the Queen and the Prince Consort, he still shines out, as the title of Mr. Hector Bolitho's life insists,

Albert The Good. He remains as he described himself in those strangely sad words on his betrothal:

"I will not let my courage fail. With firm resolution and true zeal . . . I cannot fail to continue noble, manly, and princely in all things."

But in the light of recent events we can appreciate the really great result of his self-dedication to the Queen and to her reign: their life together restored the shaken throne. And his keen, vigorous letters have shown us that—incredible as it seems—goodness is not always dull.

III.

When in December, 1935, *Victoria*, dramatized by Mr. Lawrence Housman and played by Miss Helen Hayes, became the leading lady of Broadway, it was not the first time the Queen had faced the footlights. But this time the public was ready to take her to its heart. And the book *Victoria Regina*, "a dramatic biography" of thirty one-act plays, with its engaging illustrations by Christopher Robin's Ernest H. Shepard, renders the Victorian scene with a gaiety as winning as the rich décor of the play. Mr. Housman's characterization of Victoria, though neither searching nor original, is sustained and delightful. The mingling of invented with actual situation is cleverly contrived; the dialogue is never out of character. Mr. Housman takes some slight dramatic liberties with the facts; one might question his use, adroit as it is, of the legend of Albert's illegitimacy which Mr. Bolitho has discarded. But the scene depicting the reception by the Queen, the Prince Consort, and Bertie, of that "really great writer", Mr. Martin Tupper, is one of those fictions that is truer than fact. And we revel in Mr. Housman's discovery of such actual and delicious incidents as Victoria's adoring contemplation of Albert shaving on the morning after their wedding, and her religious difficulties confided to the Dean over Jonah and the Whale and the improprieties of King David. (Mr. Shepard's drawing of the Queen cutting the Psalmist in the next world is the high spot of the book.)

The acting version, which begins with the fair-haired girl of 1837 and ends with the "happy and glorious" little plump old lady of 1897, naturally selects mainly those scenes that develop the re-

lationship of Victoria and Albert: her imperious worship, his patient affection, wrought into a harmony of duty and devotion. Perhaps it is this romantic emphasis, with the finely imaginative performance of Miss Hayes, that makes Mr. Housman's treatment of Victoria seem more sympathetic than Strachey's. Actually Mr. Housman in his Preface deals even more severely than Strachey with the Queen's "sedentary mind", her resistance to reform, the "misdeeds and manœuvres which, if practised . . . by any of her successors since, might have caused a vacancy upon the Throne". As a reigning sovereign, he declares, she lived too long. *Victoria Regina* simply dramatizes that mingling of womanly and queenly, of limitedness and greatness, that Strachey had already divined. But—and here is the difference—Mr. Housman treats Victoria the woman always gently, often fondly. As he himself puts it, "Though I have sometimes used satire, I have never once used it without some measure of affection or regard for that great, wonderful little lady . . . I have made her a figure of comedy, but not a figure of fun". Mr. Housman may well smile ironically at the oddly protective censorship that denied this charming stage performance to his fellow-countrymen, already exposed to the candors of the Queen's own letters and the revelations of a Strachey.

IV.

It is the latest of this stream of biographies, Miss Edith Sitwell's *Victoria of England*, that strikingly illustrates our present-day dilemma, our wavering attitude toward the Victorians. For most of us cannot think of them at all without more or less consciously trying to think, or at least to sound, like Strachey. And so we shift our viewpoint from intimacy to aloofness; we try to mingle sympathy with irony.

Not that Miss Sitwell sounds like Strachey—or like anything but a Sitwell. Like him, and unlike Mr. Benson, she has made of her biography, not a record but a skilful arrangement, a many-colored work of art. She has, as she disarmingly explains, "culled" choice bits from Strachey and Mr. Benson and Mr. Roger Fulford and Mr. Hector Bolitho, as well as from all the sources, the contemporary memoirs, the Queen's own letters and journals. But

she has set this mosaic in the frame of her own peculiar manner, producing an effect that is now delightful, now disconcerting. Here, for example, is the little Princess Victoria, viewed by an anonymous old gentleman—and Miss Sitwell.

“It was a world of various green, of hairy raspberry leaves trilling with dew, of elm-trees floating like islands in the clear gold-powdered air, and of warm beechen shadows. Hearing a sound of high bird-like laughter, the old gentleman looked through the sharp-scented sweet-briar hedge into the dancing green shadows beyond, and saw a little girl—in a shady straw hat through which dark leafy shadows and sweet golden freckles of the light fell on her kind, honest, homely face and on her dress of white cotton with a darn in it—watering a little garden of her own.”

This sort of verbal trilling is sprinkled over Miss Sitwell's pages like powdered poetry. “The threadbare-looking sea beat thinly upon the shore”, “their hair seemed the long gold hair of planets”; such images, with the pages of lyric names of cosmetics, spring of course from that uncanny associative faculty that Miss Sitwell herself has described as the source of her poetry. But in a book about Victoria, of all people, they do seem a bit inappropriate. Yet these startling images and subtle sound-patterns are not all mere decoration; some are deeply poetic, expressive of emotion. Only a poet who was also a woman could have felt and seen as she has the featureless days of anguish that followed the death of Albert: “the days just holes full of light, the nights holes full of darkness”. And no poet could voice more poignantly than did Victoria herself in one of her letters the stark simplicity of grief: “She sees the trees budding, the days lengthen, the primroses coming out, but she thinks herself still in the month of December”.

There is a blurred effect in *Victoria of England* that goes deeper than sometimes distracting imagery: an uncertainty of subject and of attitude. Her book, Miss Sitwell tells us, is intended not as political history, but only as a portrait of the Queen and some of her contemporaries, and a record of certain social conditions. But these conditions, the grim results of the industrial revolution, had almost no effect upon Victoria; the vast industrial and scientific movements that were transforming her age hardly touched her life. Miss Sitwell's graphic and indignant descriptions of the

miseries of the industrial workers, drawn mainly from Engels' *Conditions of the Working Class in England in 1844*, and of the living hells of the penal settlements, might seem to imply that Victoria was as deeply concerned as her great-grandsons, the present and the former King, with the lives of the workers. It was true that her sympathies went out to the humble cottagers about Balmoral; that in her later years she objected to an extra tax on matches that would bring hardship to the poor makers. But of the horrors of factory and mine and slum in those first years of her reign, of what Carlyle called "the Condition-of-England Question," the Queen knew little or nothing. Miss Sitwell admits as much when, after picturing a shabby, half-starved young man who turns out to be Karl Marx, she adds: "But the Queen of England never heard of him, or, if she heard of him, she forgot him again immediately". (Nowadays one has moments of envying the Queen of England.)

One feels that the real motive of these passages is Miss Sitwell's own intense social sympathy—that, and her pictorial sense of setting the gay, trivial life of battledore and shuttlecock at Windsor, the enchanting procession of Victorian fashion at Osborne, against the blackest background of poverty and woe. But the structural unity of the book dissolves into a cavalcade of perfumes and velvets, of filth and rags.

And the portrait of Victoria herself? That, too, seems at first to resolve itself into a series of colored moving-pictures: the homely laughing little girl in the darned white cotton frock; the young Queen with her mild blue eyes and sweet-self-willed mouth changed sometimes to a curious hardness; the radiant bride in white satin pelisse edged with swansdown; the happy wife and mother amid the statuettes of Osborne and the tartans of Balmoral; the black-veiled, desolate widow; the intrepid little old lady driving in her triumph through the cheering Jubilee crowds, and in her weariness through the violet dusky woods. Miss Sitwell claims but does not abuse the modern biographer's gift of second-sight: she divines the young Queen's imaginings in her little narrow bed, the old Queen's dreams in the last dusk—an echo there of Strachey's too-famous evocation of her dying visions.

The shade of Strachey meets us too when we search behind this

rich texture of description for the pattern of characterization. For the legacy of his pervasive irony distracts Miss Sitwell, and us, from her own conception. At moments she asserts the courage of her convictions: she has even dared to call Tennyson *noble*. (Breathes there a man since Hardy, one wonders, bold enough to call a woman *pure*? Mr. Logan Pearsall Smith's gallant plea for the once lovely, now disgraced *sentimental* gives hope of a revival of these abused or banished words.) Yet Miss Sitwell, who can describe the Prince Consort and Tennyson as epitomes of what was most selfless and highminded in the Victorian age, must needs, at the end of her chapter on "The Queen and the Laureate", succumb to Strachey thus:

"It is a comfort to know that when the end came, it was worthy, as her Majesty tells us in her journal, of so remarkable a man, since he died with his hand on his Shakespeare, and the moonlight shining over him."

But it is on Melbourne and Gladstone and Tennyson rather than on Victoria and Albert that Miss Sitwell's irony falls. Indeed, she can shift from irony to a rapture of reverence that outvictorians the Victorians:

"The Queen of England . . . had, indeed, an extraordinary power of expressing any state of being, any emotion, by her very walk, which had now the beauty of a swan floating upon its native lake, now the melancholy grace and splendour of a cloud in transit, now the pride and pomp of a wave marching . . . All the banners and brave music of the world seemed to have gone to make the walk of the Queen of England."

Under such rhapsodies we wince. And we demur a bit at Victoria of the eagle vision and the lion's heart, the unfailing self-control, the strange foresight and wisdom that time and again "saved Europe from a fresh bath of blood". We cannot help recalling moments when the self-control and the wisdom failed; when the Queen bombarded Disraeli with demands for war on Russia; sent in one day seventeen notes and telegrams to the War Office urging action against Arabi; and openly and cruelly berated Gladstone for the death of Gordon. Yet in her appeal to the King of Prussia in 1871, her warning to Germany against renewing the war in 1875, she was acting for the peace of England and of

Europe. And in her reply to Lord Russell at the time of the war over Schleswig-Holstein there sounds the authentic note of greatness:

... "It was unnecessary to remind the Queen of the honour of England, since this concerned her more nearly than any one else, but ... she was equally aware of her responsibility as Queen, and she refused to allow England to be involved in a war for purely imaginary interests, or for a point of honour which did not exist, or to sanction measures which might only too probably lead to a conflagration over the whole of Europe" ...

The secret of that greatness which so fascinated and eluded Strachey is now and then caught in Miss Sitwell's pages. For with all her waverings, she has come perhaps closer than any other biographer to the *vraie vérité* of Victoria. Strachey divined that the power of Victoria, as of Elizabeth, lay in her very femininity; but women's hearts were for him "curious entities". Yet the men who could guide Victoria were, not Gladstone, who revered her as an institution and addressed her as a public meeting, but Melbourne and Disraeli, who treated her first and last as the royal lady, the Faery—and Albert, whom she adored. It was the woman-ness of Victoria that reconciled her contradictions and complexities, that cast over her subjects a spell which no king could wield. She was more than Queen, the symbol of imperial greatness; she was the mother of her people. Perhaps the secret of Victoria was, and is, simply that she was "the mirror of a million beings who live humble lives in happiness, placing all their treasures in love".

The revolt against the Victorians has done its work. There is no more need to impale or to debunk them. We can begin to understand. For if indeed it is coming to pass, as Mr. Yeats foresees, that "time is restoring the soul's autonomy", if men and women really matter, then we may dare to see Victoria as she was: a woman, and yet great.

by Fred Lewis Pattee

GENTIAN, NOT ROSE

THE REAL EMILY DICKINSON

*God made a little gentian;
It tried to be a rose . . .*

—EMILY DICKINSON.

THE Emily Dickinson centenary of 1930 is now, after seven years, mere history. The year of superlatives when she was boomed like a Mark Twain or an Anthony Adverse seems all but forgotten now, for in the rush of life to-day seven years are as seventy in grandmother's time. To some of us it seems but yesterday—it was 1890—when she shot suddenly into the literary firmament, rated by most as a mere comet and then, after a period of scarce visibility, began to increase in magnitude until she seemed to be filling the whole sky. Is it safe even now to try to determine her quality? Can one after the lapse of only these seven years be perfectly sane in the discussion of Emily Dickinson?

Mrs. Todd, her earliest and unquestionably her most balanced editor and biographer, voiced three years before the Centenary this pathetic complaint: "Now after thirty-seven years, the Emily legend has assumed a shape unrecognizable to one who knew her. Her life is revamped to suit the taste of the times, and Emily herself has all but vanished in the process." This from a woman who long was a neighbor of the poet and an intimate friend, and who had given to her poems and her letters years of patient study.

This rocketing of an American writer long unknown into sudden perihelion is by no means a unique phenomenon. On the contrary, it is the American literary way. Note the swift change in the stella magnitude of Herman Melville. Note the men who, rejected by their own generation now head the roll of our American classic creators: Whitman, Poe, Thoreau, and, in his early period, Emerson. Rebellion against the conventional estimate appeals to

American readers, and if there be in addition a mysterious personality presenting a problem seemingly insoluble, then awake the masses. All of our acclaimed "greatest" writers were unknown to their own day. Mark Twain, until there arrived the second generation of his readers, was classed with Josh Billings, The Danbury News Man, Bob Burdette, and Bill Nye. Could Poe or Whitman or Thoreau or Melville or Lafcadio Hearn arise from their graves and read their own latest biographies, they would, to use a Brockden Brown expression, find themselves "men unknown to themselves." And now Emily Dickinson.

Four years after her death, she had appeared suddenly to the reading world, a spectral figure "robed in ghostly white". In a hermit-like seclusion almost complete she had lived her whole life in a single spot, her father's home, a Lady of Shalott:

And who had seen her wave her hand?
Or at the casement seen her stand?
Or is she known in all the land,
The Lady of Shalott?
There she weaves by night and day
A magic web—

not, however, with materials found in the actual world of which she knew little, but

Moving thro' a mirror clear
That hangs before her all the year
Shadows of the world appear,

and of these she wove her web—her poems.

I.

There are three Emily Dickinsons, if we begin our consideration with the date when she first appeared in published form. First, there is the Emily Dickinson of the Todd-Higginson period as revealed in the three issues of her poems in the eighteen-nineties with their prefaces, and also in Mrs. Todd's edition of the letters in 1896. Then, second, there is the Emily Dickinson of the Madame Bianchi period beginning in 1914. Finally, there is the Emily Dickinson of the Centenary period, 1930 and beyond. In none of these, however, may we find Emily Dickinson,—the real Emily. Consider a paragraph written in 1931 by Mrs. Todd:

For several years, it seems, a feeling has been growing among students of Emily's life that something is wrong. Their picture of her in her setting is not altogether true . . . Several biographies of her have appeared in recent years, all different. They have not lessened the confusion. But they can be said to coincide on at least one point, best defined in Emily's own words: 'Biography first convinces us of the fleeing of the biographed'.

During the first period there seems to have been no attempt at sensation. In the three prefaces, (one by Higginson, another in Higginson's *Atlantic Monthly* paper of 1891, and still again in Mrs. Todd's two volumes of the letters of Emily Dickinson) there is perhaps as complete a revelation of the poet as we shall ever have. Her contemporaries in Amherst seem to have had little to contribute: they saw almost nothing of her. To Higginson, however, during a period of almost thirty years she had sent something like sixty of her brief lyrics and with them many letters, but they had not made impression enough upon him to have him proclaim her as a poet. In fact, he had advised her against publication, and when some years after Emily's death her sister Lavinia had persuaded Mrs. Todd, wife of a neighbor, to edit a volume of selections he had opposed the project. He yielded finally, and wrote the introductory essay.

Backed by his influence, which in the Boston of the nineties was a real force, the manuscript was offered to Roberts Brothers, then at the height of its popularity. The firm, however, hesitated. The poems, they said, are "quite as remarkable for defects as for beauties, and are generally devoid of true poetical qualities". Arlo Bates, publisher's reader, also hesitated, but finally consented to publication if he were allowed to edit out "just about one-half of the poems". His report, the first extant critical estimate of her poetry beside those in Higginson's letters seen only by her is enlightening:

She never learned her art, and constantly one is impelled to wonder and to pity at the same time . . . She has put upon paper what reminded her of a mood or an emotion, and in nine cases out of ten she has not got enough down to convey the intelligence of her mood to any but the most sympathetic and poetical . . . It seems to me, with all due deference to those

who did it, that the work of exclusion, that most ungrateful task, has not been pushed far enough . . . I think the force of the volume, it being understood just what it is, would carry it farther than most volumes of verse go nowadays. Its faults are colossal, but it has the real stuff in no stinted quantities.

And he concluded his report with: "I do not think the volume would make a tremendous stir. I do think it would be a distinct success of esteem."

Excellent criticism. The book, after its manuscript had endured its major operation, did prove to be a distinct *succès d'estime*. The 115 poems, chosen from what Miss Taggard later estimated as 1200 manuscript possibilities and issued timidly in an edition of some 480 copies, sold so rapidly that within a month two other printings were required and the following year a new collection was printed. The success of this led in 1896 to a third collection, edited this time by Mrs. Todd alone. Not a tremendous stir surely, though the *Nation* was loud in its trumpeting. "No volumes of American poetry", it tooted in fine disregard of facts, "not even the most popular of Longfellow's, have had so wide and so steady a sale." This in 1896, and according to the bibliography issued by the Jones Library at Amherst, the total sales of all three volumes to that date had been only 7,340.

The *Nation*, from the first highly commendatory, had greeted the first volume with superlatives, "With all its irregularities and even oddities on its face, there is power enough on many a page of this book to set up whole volumes of average poetry", a statement that must be weighed only after considering the poetic drought of the time when the little rill seemed like a torrent from Mount Olympus. Midway in the century, between two wars, poetry was standing Janus-faced, fondly reminiscent yet feeling in its blood that new *fin de siècle* lust for rebellion, that resurgence of individualism that was touching Lanier. Whitman had come to his own and was infecting the young poets with his new gospel of poetic liberty, and above the horizon was rising what seemed like a new red planet Mars—Rudyard Kipling. And while critics were speculating whether it was indeed a planet or only a fiery comet, there had appeared suddenly and out of nowhere the

strange apparition called Emily Dickinson, at first sight the most lawless of them all. At no other moment in the history of our poetry could she have come with the same effect. Howells, his eyes always on the literary east, adding new planetoids nightly to the literary Nautical Almanac, and labelling them first magnitude planets, hailed joyfully the new poet, shouting his discovery from the hill-top of *Harper's Magazine*. "A distinctive addition to the literature of the world", he ruled, "and could not be left out of any record of it". Young Stephen Crane, his literary wing-feathers sprouting mightily, heard Howells read from the little book and then rushed back to his room to pen "The Black Riders". To him Emily Dickinson, though she came like a phonograph record out of the Victorian past, meant conscious revolt with intensity of expression.

But the old guard, especially in literary New England, was inclined to be skeptical. *Atlantic Monthly* greeted the little book with thumbs down. Its genial editor, Aldrich, hiding in the anonymous "Contributor's Club" fuselage, dubbed the volume "a poetical chaos". The verses, he said, "have a pathetic air of yearning to be poems . . . An eccentric, dreamy, half-educated recluse in an out-of-the-way New England village (or anywhere else) cannot with impunity set at defiance the laws of gravitation and of grammar." And he even dared to take a shy at her famous editor. "Whenever a woman poet is in question, Mr. Higginson always puts on his rose-colored spectacles." And note his final prophecy: "Miss Dickinson's versicles have a queerness and a quaintness that have stirred a momentary curiosity in emotional bosoms. Oblivion lingers in the immediate neighborhood."

According to the *Nation*, 1896, "the books met with nothing but vehement hostility and derision on the part of the leading English critics, and the sale of the first volume, when reprinted there, did not justify the issue of a second." The London *Daily News* characterized the poems as "balderdash . . . mere maundering . . . a farrago of illiterate and uneducated sentiment." Andrew Lang dismissed the poems as "mere nonsense". "A curious little book" he called it. It "has already reached its fourth edition, partly, no doubt, because Mr. Howells praised it very highly". The Boston *Transcript* was even more hostile, even inventing the

word "*Dickinsonese* which is now a mild epidemic in New England." Mrs. Todd's issue in two volumes of the *Letters of Emily Dickinson* was financially a failure. For her years of labor which she conscientiously put upon the collecting and editing of the letters she received nothing. Finally the book went into a one-volume edition and at last was closed out at twenty-five cents a copy. An article in the *Forum* entitled "Three Forgotten Poetesses"—Amy Levy, Emma Lazarus, and Emily Dickinson—closes the first period of Emily Dickinson as a published poet.

II.

The second period I have termed the Madame Bianchi period—Emily Dickinson presented as a person, Emily Dickinson romanticized, sentimentalized, drenched with superlatives. In 1914 Madame Bianchi, niece of the poet, issued a small selection from the manuscripts in her possession entitling it *The Single Hound. Poems of a Lifetime*. Ten years later she issued the *Complete Poems* edition, and during the same year her *Life and Letters of Emily Dickinson*. Her chapter "The End of Peace" brought sensation into the literary dove-cotes. All at once a love affair was found as the solution of the Emily problem. This, then, was the reason why the poet had immured herself. In 1929 Madame Bianchi added further fuel to the smudge by publishing a fresh collection of poems. Already she had issued a "Complete Poems" edition giving to it the intriguing title *Further Poems of Emily Dickinson, Withheld from Publication by Her Sister Lavinia*,—withheld, it was explained, because they threw too widely ajar the door to the family skelton closet. This at least was the inference of a curious public. But, buying the book, they were for the most part disappointed. It offered but a glimpse.

III.

Then came the centenary year, 1930, and soon there were four biographies of Emily Dickinson, and four different lovers, and with it came a new "Complete Edition" of the Poems—778 poems now. Then had come two bibliographies (Dickinson material comes out in pairs in Amherst!), and endless articles in

magazines and reviews, much of it in the key of personalia and literary gossip. The flood-gates of sentimentality and sensation and romance were wide open.

The proponents and biographers and defenders of the poet have been from the first mostly women—*dux femina facti*. To Mrs. Todd, pioneer in a new and trackless field, there can be given only praise, and that despite her unscholarly editing, her haphazard arrangement of the poems, and her composition of titles, with Higginson's connivance, not made by the poet, some of them indeed far-fetched like "Rouge et Noir" and "Rouge Gagne". Her expurgations and emendations of text are also in the account against her but, considering the handicaps under which she worked, she is to be praised rather than blamed.

The others in the feminine ranks of her biographers and editors are not so praiseworthy. Sister Lavinia was guilty of the first and greatest blunder, the burning of the letters written to Emily, among them some sixty written by Higginson, many of them letters critical and advisory in the range of her poetical work. Whether this *auto da fe* was ordered or not by the poet, and whether or not the burning was to include also her poems, is open to question. Madame Bianchi records that after Emily's death there was found an "old mahogany bureau filled with her friends' letters marked to be burned unread and her own manuscript poems. Her sacred wishes were carried out by the family to the utmost—until they came to her own work. It seemed to them too much to ask of them to destroy this wealth of her inner genius. . . . That the verdict of the world would have been treason, had they acted otherwise, has been abundantly proved."

According to Mrs. Bianchi, then, the poems had been ordered burned with the letters, but the usually more accurate Mrs. Todd records the matter with a decided difference:

Soon after her death her sister Lavinia came to me, as usual in late evening, actually trembling with excitement. She told me she had discovered a veritable treasure—quantities of Emily's poems which she had had no instructions to destroy. She had already burned without examination hundreds of manuscripts and letters to Emily, many of them from nationally known persons, thus, she believed, carrying out her sister's partly expressed wishes, but without intelligent

discrimination. Later she bitterly regretted such inordinate haste.

The second blunder was the haphazard editing, not only of the first series of poems but of all the subsequent issues. From the great mass of manuscript poems why select the 115 seemingly at random and throw them without chronology into four classifications never dreamed of by their author? Then again, on what basis were the poems selected? We know of forty-eight of her poems that she sent to Higginson as specimens of her best work. Of these only six appear in the first series, nineteen in the second, six in the third, and two in the fourth. As late as 1924, in the *Complete Poems* edition, fourteen of these poet's-own-choice-from-her-work poems are not to be found.

Unfortunate too has been the withholding of material, the expurgating and changing of letters, the withdrawal of some of the Higginson letters as "too intimate for publication", the careful sequestration of much of the manuscript material, and the apparent division of the holders of the manuscript poems into two seemingly hostile camps. To quote Professor Whicher, a resident of Amherst and the most competent critic who thus far has studied the available evidence: "Should Madame Bianchi be inclined to make a careful study of the manuscripts in her possession and to publish the results, she might make the greatest contribution within the power of any living person toward an eventual understanding of the poet's development." Let me add without comment another suggestive circumstance: Mrs. Pollitt in her biography of the poet mentions Madame Bianchi's various volumes, including the *Complete Poems* edition, "from which I am not permitted by the copyright owners to make quotations".

At present there is chaos in the textual editing, sometimes very evident where photographic reproductions of manuscripts have been used as illustrative matter in various volumes. Mrs. Todd's versions of the poems often differ from Mrs. Bianchi's. The poem, for instance, first found in a Higginson letter,

Not knowing when herself may come,

differs greatly in diction and punctuation when reproduced by Madame Bianchi. If the poet revised her manuscript poems or

presented them in different versions the reader should know it. Again, lyrics of four lines in one edition may have eight lines in another, as in the case of the lyric beginning

Could mortal lip divine

or in Madame Bianchi's edition

Could any lip divine.

Greatly do the poems need a competent editor. Mrs. Todd after long and intense study of the manuscript material in her possession determined in an approximate way the probable dates of many of the poems by the change in the handwriting from decade to decade. Professor Whicher too, with the materials he has been permitted to use, has determined the approximate dates of one-fifth of the 778 poems in the Centenary edition. His conclusion has been the conclusion of every other scholarly critic: "Of the growth of Emily Dickinson as a poet some conception of the sequence of her poems is a first essential." Even earlier than Dr. Whicher, Mrs. Todd had voiced the need of an edition of the poems chronologically ordered: "Her letters cannot complete the picture until her poems have been fitted into the sequence where they belong, a task that remains to be done."

The task still (1937) remains to be done.

IV.

All of the manuscripts should be open for the inspection of students and critics. Already it is evident that much of the editorial work has been bungling and unscholarly. Concerning the manuscripts that passed through Mrs. Todd's hands, she has observed that the changes of text suggested by the poet were numerous and at times "baffling".

In the so-called 'copied' poems, tiny crosses written beside a word which might be changed ultimately and which referred to scores of possible words at the bottom of the page were all strictly alike, so that only the most sympathetic and at-one-with-the-author feeling would determine where each word belonged.

In the "Humming Bird" poem, for instance, for the adjective in

the phrase "with a revolving wheel", there are suggested four possible variants: "delusive", "dissembling", "dissolving", "renewing".

According to the best information possible to obtain, the manuscripts are a chaotic mass, estimated to be in number anything from 1200 to a figure twice as large. Scraps many of them are "written on margins of newspapers on grocer's brown paper bags, backs of envelopes, or other homely media." To reveal the poet full circle, a definite edition must be prepared with foot-notes and with a biographical introduction bare of superlatives.

My advice to the writer of this preliminary study would be that he throw aside most of the biographical material now in print and all of the centenary papers in magazines and reviews. To say in tones of seriousness that Emily Dickinson is "the Sappho of American poetry", "the feminine Walt Whitman", "akin only to Emerson", "to be ranked above Longfellow, Poe, and Whittier", and that her poems "are the finest by a woman in the English language", is to render her ridiculous. And bare should this introduction be of sensational guess-work concerning the alleged love affair of the poet,—that sentimentalized possibility that has reached even the movies. Deplorable indeed the fact that two dramas have been woven of this fabric of nothing: Susan Glaspell's *Alison's House*, which received the Pulitzer prize of its year—"a gentle and uneventful tap-dancing of the Dickinson family's dismayed skeletons", to quote a masculine commentator, and then *Brittle Heaven*, the man involved in each drama being the husband of Emily Dickinson's best friend Helen Hunt Jackson,—preposterous scandalizations both of them! "It was quite difficult to be sensible about Emily Dickinson then", wrote one of her feminine biographers. Quite difficult for lady critics even now.

V.

In this welter of modernity has not the actual Emily Dickinson, like the real Poe, and the "honest-to-God" Thoreau and Melville, been irrecoverably lost, even as Mrs. Todd feared? It is more than probable. She is becoming a sentimentalized myth. Few to-day read Emily Dickinson beyond the superlatives and the love-

story into the poetical product which is the whole matter. Fewer still read the published letters of the poet, though they contain some of her best work.

In my 1915 paper, now in Christopher Morley's chest, I spoke of the poems as media through which one might catch possible glimpses of a woman's naked soul. I am inclined now, with more documentary evidence at hand, poems not allowed me to see in 1915, to believe that they do afford such glimpses. The lyrics we know were written, most of them, like Thoreau's journal which he declared he kept for himself and the gods, with never a thought of possible publication. But these Emily poems were a journal for herself alone, even the gods excluded. I know of no feminine intensity like it save in the case of Emily Brontë, a sister soul of the poet's.

Dare you see a soul at white heat?—

she cries into the thin air, and whether you dare or not you are powerless to escape the thrill of it. For a single glimpse consider a confession like this:

Doubt me my dim companion!
Why, God would be content
With but a fraction of the love
Poured thee without a stint.
The whole of me forever—
What more the woman can?

And then

This doth thou doubt, sweet?
Then have I
Nothing to show
But Calvary.

To these add such a lyric as "I got so I could hear his name", in the volume *Further Poems*.

That these were genuine cries following actual experience of intensity of love and parting seem to most readers to be obvious fact. But consider the Brontë sisters in seclusion on the Yorkshire moor, consider Emily Brontë, and *Wuthering Heights*. No actuality of experience there. Is not Emily Dickinson dramatizing her own heart and imaginings, and like the Lady of Shalott has she not reached this intensity after a mere glimpse of some Sir Launcelot?

Mrs. Todd, her near neighbor and close friend for years, recorded in an early introduction to the poet that "she lived in seclusion from no love disappointment". Add to this Professor Whicher's record that the poet herself had once protested "that she was not to be identified with the speaker in the first person of her verses." That these intense lyrics recording passion may not be autobiographical records, however, takes from them not one jot of their dramatic power or their literary value.

Hunting in the poems, therefore, for the actual Emily is hazardous adventuring. Better hunting there is in the letters, but even here one must tread with caution. Have we not here a *selected* group of letters? Higginson confessed that he held back one group of her letters. Then from the sixty published by Mrs. Todd, a surprising number of parts and wholes were omitted by Mrs. Bianchi. For some reason she passed lightly over Higginson's "philandering" with Emily, as she termed it, a word she should hasten to change in any later editions of her work.

VI.

The problem as we shall see is best studied from other angles. To understand it at all one must consider the New England in which she lived her life. One must realize what it was to be a "campus child" in a small-town college under the rule of a Congregational religious body, in an atmosphere still vibrant with Puritanism.

The Dickinson family, nine generations unbroken as to locality, and in the tenth an abnormality—in botany a "sport"—a commonplace in New England towns. But from this "sport", efflorescence; not a commonplace thing at all! A thing rather to wonder at. The melting glacier evolves blossoms—frost-flowers—strange Indian-pipe-like blooms, colorless, odorless, ghost-like, single. Nothing just like them in all literature, though Emerson's northing acres had for soil the same glacial drift. New England individualism seeding into queerness; religion hardening down into a *cliché*; love in its natural channels repressed, denied, thwarted, become a growing underground cataract—strange wreckage one finds on the terminal moraines of the Puritan ice-age. Denied expression in

the natural way, these "queer ones" lapsed often into insanity. Consider Hawthorne's mother. But Emily Dickinson found expression and went not over the brink. Even Higginson, however, had at times his doubts. To his wife he once wrote of "my partially cracked poetess at Amherst", and again, to his sisters, of "my eccentric poetess, Emily Dickinson", and yet again "I'm afraid Mary's other remark 'Oh, why do the insane so cling to you?' still holds." In his *Atlantic* article of 1891 he spoke of her in terms of "excess of tension and of something abnormal". From his two visits to her at Amherst, he wrote, he brought away "the impression of something as unique and as remote as Undine or Thelka."

Never did she escape from the ancestral environment, and until she was forty-four years of age the family circle was not broken. Unconsciously to herself she grew into her solitary way of living. Little by little the bonds that bound her in her tiny home round of life became habits and then chains, until at last she went nowhere, saw no one, and then gradually evolved a "morbid dread of being seen by strangers". To such extremes did this aversion go that she at last refused to write the address upon her letters. The post-master would see the work of her naked hand. At Emily's request, Mrs. Todd, who was a talented musician, went often to the Dickinson home to play the piano or to sing but always the poet remained in the dim unseen, sending out little poetic notes of appreciation or else a flower or a plate of cakes when the music ceased. "I grew very familiar with her voice", records Mrs. Todd.

Behind all this lay, of course a complexity of other causes impossible ever to isolate. The personality of her father greatly influenced her. Kindly, yet inflexible, religious with Old Testament conceptions of religion, he ruled his family by the intensity of his mere presence. In every way he ruled them. Family devotions he led with the Bible read in the doom tone of Puritanism. Attendance upon divine worship was an unwritten law during all of Emily's childhood. Only the Scriptures seem to have received his approval as reading matter. At every point the household life centered in him. Thus a narrowing of the child's thinking into a parochial, indeed into a household, circumference. It prolonged beyond the ordinary the childhood period. Higginson records that

his first impression of Emily at both of his visits to Amherst was that she was a mere child.

A life *in vacuo*; seemingly held there by no tyrannical forces, yet inflexibly held none the less. If we are to read some of her poems as cries from actual experience, time and again she dreamed of escape:

I never hear the word escape
Without a quicker blood,
A sudden expectation,
A flying attitude.

I never hear of prisons broad
By soldiers battered down
But I tug childish at my bars,—
Only to fail again.

Denied contacts with life, every least touch of reality was, after the manner of isolated childhood, a tremendous matter to be dwelt upon and magnified.

VII.

What undoubtedly saved her from mere sterile "queerness", was her ability,—first tested after she had entered her thirties—to express herself with the written word; an ability rarely attained in the New England of her period where feminine repression was deemed to be a scriptural command. In her creative urge, thwarted physical forces gathered like a flood behind barriers. Nature inevitably wins,—the barrier at last must give way, but sometimes its tides can be diverted. Literature has often been a safety vent. Again, remember the three Brontë spinsters on the Yorkshire moor. After thirty, in all her letters intensity of feeling, religious gaspings, cryptic voicings, huddled thinking, epigrammatic concentrations—elliptical often to the bounds of meaninglessness. A soul in the flood waters struggling for the meaning of life.

The first uniqueness of this early rush of expression, as seen by the casual reader, concerns the strangeness of its form. All of her poetry from the first ran riot over the rules. No conscious rebellion however! She knew no better. She simply wrote in any jumble of form that came to her pen. Blake has been mentioned often by her critics, but Blake, tropic of soul, lost in the

jungles of the night, was no New England soul feminine. And she had never read him. Traces of the Bible one may find often, and traces abundant there are of the hymn-book—especially in the areas of the metrical—but even with these discoveries one has not gone far. According to passages in her letters, she had read many standard poets but in her verses there are no echoes.

Rebellion! cry the younger critics, "free-verse" makers, riders over the conventional. "Behold the mother of the new poetry"! Listen to the young man Kreymborg: "one agrees," he writes, "she took liberties with grammar, syntax, metre, and rhythm, made verbs play the part of nouns and adverbs of adjectives, divorced subjects from their predicates, embraced audacious ellipses and other scandalous non-conformities. Then one gives in to the drunken girl and goes drunken with her . . . She feels first and thinks second . . . and her product dynamic mysticism . . . She rarely wrote academically." And this from another defender: "When one can stride from star to star, who thinks to criticise the manner of the striding?" Thus the Dickinsonians.

But may we not ask of even the most rebellious of innovators a reasonable amount of consistence of manner? Even a casual reading of Emily Dickinson convinces one that her musical sense demanded the "bells", demanded recurrent rhymes, and the regular falling of metric measures. She felt too that poetry was expressed in stanzas, her most common units being those of the church hymnal. Why then start her poem in conventional form and then suddenly switch it into chaotic formlessness? Why these amazing mis-rhymings, the worst I know of in all English: Yankee pronunciations like Whittier's: *love* and *of*, *home* and *come*, *wine* and *join*; or approximate rhymes: *observe* and *love*, *near* and *hair*, *know* and *two*, or, as everywhere in her poems, rhymes grotesque to the bounds of the incredible: *to-day* and *I*, *comes* and *afternoons*, *small* and *infidel*. To every normal ear these are discords, positive defects that not even genius can surmount. Rhyme in poetry is by no means a necessity, but by every law of harmony and commonsense when one begins a poem with a definite rhyming system it must follow throughout the same system or else give the sense of discord and even shock to the reader. Were she a conscious rebel she would have thrown off completely shackles of uni-

form rhyme and stanza form and expressed herself in free verse.
Either all or nothing!

VIII.

In my 1915 review I characterized her poetry as "fragmentary", a poor adjective undoubtedly. Yet Higginson earlier had called her poetry "spasmodic", and Mrs. Todd had spoken of the verses as "shreds" and as "glints". "Versicles"—the term is Aldrich's—is the word I sought perhaps. So much of her product is the brief voicing of a mood often trivial. In the *Complete Poems* edition there are 316 12mo. pages, and on these pages 593 lyrics. Tiny flashes; one has hardly realized the mood of one of them before another and another and another crowds in. And always central the dominant ego. William Gilmore Simms, in a letter to Chivers in 1852, condemned such verse: "Address yourself to labors of length," he wrote. "Give up fugitive verses which lead only to one form of egotism or another, as Poe, who wrote in jerks and spasms only." He would have written the same to Emily Dickinson who also wrote in "jerks and spasms" of her introvert moods. Says Don Marquis, "Those lonely, timid, prim souls who write and never show it to any human being at all, these are the supreme egoists." Be it noted that just one-half of the 115 poems in the 1890 edition of Emily Dickinson contain the pronoun "I" and that 75 of the lyrics in the *Complete Poems* edition have "I" as their initial word.

The lyrist by the very terms of his art must be subjective, but never must the poet, whatever his instrument, be enclosed totally within his own circumference. The great poet voices humanity, overflows into the life of his times, interprets as far as in him lies the meaning of the riddle of life and gives, eternally gives. But to withdraw to the top of a column, like a Hindoo saint and eternally receive, is stagnation. Emily's pathetic longing in the lyric

If I can stop one heart from breaking

is impotent dreaming. In her life there was no shred of action. "She was an anchoress," said an early reviewer. "Confined was she, a prisoner within walls, but with the top open to the sky." It was this openness to the sky that gives her poetry its chief value.

But her sky, one soon realizes, she saw always through a Puritan haze and she saw it with thoughts only upon her sole self. A religion-obsessed soul driven in upon herself by solitude, she broods upon sin and personal salvation and eternity. The words "immortality", "heaven", "God", "death", sound through her lyrics like dominant chords. Religious was she with an intensity and a completeness that was oriental. In 1854 she was so agonized by her apprehensions that a dear friend had "died in his sins" and so was a candidate for damnation, that she wrote Edward Everett Hale, then a preacher widely known, asking him if he could give her any hope.

A feminine Emerson without benefit of Harvard and the schools? Yes, a minor Emerson, if one can imagine what he might have been had he lived on a column without expressing himself to the world. Both were arctic souls. Both tried to patch together the remnants of a philosophy that had been plowed through by the glacier of modernity. Both gave out oracular voicings, dogmatic preachments in tones often irritatingly sphinx-like. In Emerson however, no haziness, no incompleteness, no huddled workmanship. Everywhere in Emerson compression, and yet no omission of elements essential to his meaning, no compelled guesswork, no elliptical haziness. Everywhere sharpness of outline, right lines, completeness. Such obscurity as one seems to find in a lyric like "Brahma" comes usually from the reader's lack of knowledge of the topic treated. Emerson explained no illusions. Emily Dickinson's mind, on the contrary, was feminine: she thought in tropes, she jumped at conclusions, she spurned at times all the step-ladders of logic and arrived, when she arrived at all, by the wings of intuition. And sometimes her reader, unequipped with such wings, is hopelessly puzzled. Arlo Bates, her earliest critic writing when she was totally unknown, called her poems touching philosophy and religion the weakest part of her work and as publisher's editor he removed a large number of such poems from her first edition.

IX.

What then has Emily Dickinson added to the long tradition of American poetry? A few lyrics, undoubtedly, that will continue to

enrich the anthologies, even the most select. Moreover, some of the prose found in her letters is distinctive, far more so, I feel, than the greater part of her poetry. A passage like this, for instance, found in a letter to Higginson, might have been written by Whitman as poetry: "Ah dainty, dainty Death! Ah democratic Death! Grasping the proudest zinnia from my purple garden—then deep to his bosom calling the serf's child." And this she called prose.

But her poetry? Always as I read it I think of Higginson's impression of her childlikeness. The originality of it is the originality of wondering childhood, and so in its comparisons and its analogies. A sunrise she describes in terms of ribbons and bonnets. Even conceits, mere prettinesses, as

God made a little gentian;
It tried to be a rose,

That the post-war realists and naturalists have made her a leader of their literary rebellion is a strange phenomenon, for her poetry is fundamentally Puritan, and not in the least has she obeyed the modern demand that poetry shake itself free from the "romantic ego and fix itself upon objects perceived."

Great need is there in her overgrown garden for vigorous weeding assaults. An anthology not larger than the 1890 first edition is imperative if she is to endure. Carefully must it be made by a critic completely free from the two camps at Amherst; one not too liberal and not too conservative. It is fashionable now to discuss literature in terms of ordeals. Let me say to the friends of Emily Dickinson that her ordeal is close at hand. It may be too late even now to rescue her from the swamps into which her zealous feminine proponents have pushed her, from the sentimentalism surrounding the alleged love affair, and from the jungle growth of superlatives in which the real poet has been all but lost. One can only pray for the coming of an adequate editor.

by William York Tindall

D. H. LAWRENCE AND THE PRIMITIVE

D. H. LAWRENCE has been admired as a writer and thinker by many respectable critics including Aldous Huxley and Stephen Spender. That even dialectical materialists have applauded a writer who belongs so clearly to the tradition of romantic primitivism is pleasing but, in view of the persistence of romantic taste, not very odd. It would be odder if Marxists, Humanists, and reasonable men were immune from the effects of a taste and tradition which they sometimes deplore. The character of our taste and of Lawrence's work may be made clearer by an inquiry into the strange origins of what Lawrence called his "philosophy". To notice his sources and the use he made of them may have the further effect of impairing for some readers the value of his work, which depends so much upon message; but I am not unwilling to run this risk.

Primitivism, defined by Webster and Professor Lovejoy as a belief in the greater excellence of ancient man because he was closer to nature than his descendants, has been common for many years, and recently has accompanied the romantic revolt against reason, materialism, science, and the other misfortunes of our civilization. Lawrence is of interest to the historian because he combined in his life and work most of the characteristics of recent romanticism. He detested reason, the machine, and science, and longed for a return to that religious, intuitive, and visceral closeness to nature to be found in savage and archaic man. His favorite world was antediluvian; his second choice was the world before 2000 B.C., and failing that, he contented himself with the vestiges of glory which he discovered in the archaic societies of the Egyptians, Etruscans, Chaldeans, Hindus, and Mrs. Mabel Dodge Luhan's Indians. He was sensible to realize that modern man could not return to the condition of savages or even of Chaldeans,

but he felt that the world might be reborn by a fusion with the past, by a return to the living worshipful universe of early man.

The recovery of this ancient closeness to nature was the aim of most of Lawrence's later works. This may be seen in the passages devoted to the Egyptians, the early Celts, and the Africans in *Women in Love*, *Kangaroo*, *Aaron's Rod*, and in many essays of the *Porcupine* and *Phoenix* volumes. With the cause of this primitivism, Lawrence's dislike of the present world, I am not now concerned; rather, I propose to show some of the sources in his reading of his primitivistic theory and of his later works, especially *The Plumed Serpent*. This novel, published in 1926, deals with a religious revival in Mexico, a return to man's ancient contact with nature, symbolized by the pre-Aztec god Queszalcoatli. *The Plumed Serpent* reveals more obviously than the other novels the primitive ideal which later inspired Lawrence's *Apocalypse* and *Etruscan Places*.

These three works are based upon reading so considerable as to deserve the suspicion of scholarship were its character and use not even more deserving of suspicion. The reading upon which Lawrence based his primitivism has received almost no notice. M. Ernest Sellière, with whose account of Lawrence's romantic nature one cannot quarrel, has devoted many pages of his recent book to asserting Lawrence's debt to the German Rousseauists such as Bachofen, Bleibtreu, and Ludwig Klages. Lawrence resembles these Germans as indeed he resembles many other romantics, and it cannot be denied that the influence of these men upon his thought is possible; but M. Seillière in his rage over what he detests has made the error of confusing similarity with origin. He would have a stronger case if he had any evidence to support it.

The evidence for Lawrence's reading is obscured by oblique or partial references in his letters and essays or by his silence. Lawrence rarely recalled the names of authors. He was careless about titles and sometimes confused one with another. His opinions about books as about places varied with his moods. From his letters one may gather that as his feelings rose or fell he liked or disliked the same thing and that he often decried what he found most useful. Had he been a more temperate man, his opinions about his reading might have been as important for our purposes

as his reading. But with Lawrence we must be contented with noting his use rather than his abuse of books, and we must remember that he cannot be blamed for his nature or for failing to aid a search which he could have neither anticipated nor welcomed. With some pains, I have been able to discover many of the books he read by an examination of his writing and by correspondence with his friends. Mrs. Lawrence, who read the books her husband read, endured my tiresome questions and was very helpful. My inquiry, thus assisted, has shown that Lawrence's primitivism is indebted to two kinds of books, the anthropological and the occult, of which I shall first consider the former kind.

I.

From 1913 to the time of his death Lawrence was devoted to works on ancient man. We know from his letters that in 1916 he read Edward Tylor's *Primitive Culture*, a study of myth and animism; that before this he had become familiar with Frazer's *Golden Bough* and Jane Harrison's *Ancient Art and Ritual*; and that in 1918 he read *The Voice of Africa*, an account of Atlantian culture by Leo Frobenius, the anthropologist and the only German, M. Seillière complains, with whom Lawrence admits acquaintance. Haste may have kept this scholar from noticing that Lawrence says he read Jung in 1918, probably his *Psychology of the Unconscious*, a study of primitive myth and symbol. In 1916 Lawrence read two histories of early Egypt, one by Maspero, as Mrs. Julian Huxley, who lent it to Lawrence, has kindly informed me, the other a work lent him by Lady Ottoline Morrell, who remembers neither author nor title. Between 1925 and 1929 Lawrence read other books on Egypt, as well as books on India, the iron age, downland man, and the Etruscans, among the last those of Mommesen and of Weege.

That these works impressed Lawrence deeply is shown by his many references to their contents, by his use of materials from them, and by comments such as this on an unidentified *History of the East* which he read in 1916: "... something in me lights up and understands these old dead peoples, and I love it: Babylon, Nineveh, Ashurbanipal, how one somehow suddenly understands it. And I cannot tell you the joy of ranging far back there ..." These

works not only inflamed his passions but gave him the ideas on animism, ritual dancing, and comparative mythology which formed so large a part of his belief. Edward Tylor, for example, appears to be responsible for the theory of animism and Jane Harrison for the theory of ritual dancing by which Lawrence interpreted the religious exercise of the American Indians and upon which he based the dancing in *The Plumed Serpent*. His debt to Jane Harrison is evident in his essay "Indians and Entertainment", which, written years after he had read her work, shows at once the retentiveness and disorder of his memory. Lawrence disagreed with Jung over the nature of the unconscious, but accepted, as many passages in his work testify, Jung's idea that the symbols of primitive man persist in the modern mind. In these symbolic vestiges, as in the ritual dance, Lawrence found a way to the past. Primitive animism, as presented by Tylor and Frazer, and the theories of Herakleitos, Anaximander and other early Greeks, on whom Lawrence seems to have read a commentary before 1915, gave him his central belief in the need for contact with the living universe. His desire to regain this contact, which he thought primitive man and gamekeepers enjoyed with sun, moon, trees, and horses, explains Lawrence's strange Druidic worship of vegetables and his stranger but no less virtuous relationship with Susan, his cow.

This animal, celebrated by Lawrence in the essay "Love Was Once a Little Boy", was to him a symbolical portion of the living universe. "How can I equilibrate myself with my black cow Susan?" he asked. "... There is a sort of relation between us. And this relation is part of the mystery of love . . . The queer cowy mystery of her is her changeless cowy desirableness." As he milked her or looked into her eyes, he felt as much as modern man can feel of that closeness to nature once enjoyed by the Egyptian and the savage. Flowers and trees received from Lawrence a similar devotion. Birkin, the hero of *Women in Love*, lay naked in the rain among the primroses and rolled among the pine needles in order to keep his back to nature. A student of the romantic movement would be less astonished over this conduct than the flowers, the cows, and even the Egyptians might be expected to be.

Besides histories of Egypt and general works on ancient man, Lawrence read books on Mexican archaeology and history, not mentioned in his letters, but cited in his novels or essays, or remembered by his friends. Before and during his visits to America from 1923 to 1925 he read Prescott's *Conquest of Mexico*, Thomas Belt's *The Naturalist in Nicaragua*, Adolph Bandelier's *The Gilded Man*, Bernal Diaz' *Conquest of Mexico*, Humboldt's *Vues des Cordillères*, and several volumes of the *Anales del Museo Nacional* of Mexico. Though these books on new world antiquities had small influence upon Lawrence's thought and work, they show his interest in Mexico and the extent of his reading. It might be concluded that Lawrence was a systematic student, but his character, his own testimony, and that of his friends argue against this inference. When he became interested in a subject, he did not go to a public library or to a bookdealer; he read what books he could borrow from his friends. In this way he managed in spite of his unsedentary habits to read widely if not well.

It was his good fortune in Mexico to find a friend with a large library. This literate friend, at whose home near Mexico City Lawrence stayed for a time, was the late Zelia Nuttall, the archaeologist. For this information I am most extremely obliged to a distant relative of Mrs. Nuttall's, Dr. George Vaillant, Curator of Mexican Archaeology at the American Museum of Natural History. Mrs. Nuttall appears in *The Plumed Serpent* as the eccentric Mrs. Norris. To depict a host in this unflattering way might be considered a breach of decency on the part of another writer, but on the part of Lawrence it cannot be so construed; for it was his custom to immortalize his friends and acquaintances. The widow of a famous Harvard radical and a prominent Indian general, for example, are said to appear in this same novel as Kate and Don Cipriano.

From Mrs. Lawrence I learned that her husband read Mrs. Nuttall's *Fundamental Principles of Old and New World Civilizations*. To this formidable work Lawrence owed most of his wide but inaccurate knowledge of primitive Mexico. Mrs. Nuttall's theme is the ancient cult of the above and the below, the sky and earth, embodied in two gods Huitzilopochtli and Tezcatlipoca; in Quetzalcoatli, the divine twin who symbolized the life-giving union

of the two; and in two earthy rulers, the living representatives of the gods. Quetzalcoatl's name, meaning bird-serpent and twin, indicates duality, the bird standing for the above, the snake for the below, and twin for their union. He was the god of the fertilizing contact of wind and rain with fire and earth. Mrs. Nuttall's theory pleased Lawrence by its resemblance to animism and early Greek thought, and it gave him the device of the two gods and their earthly representatives for *The Plumed Serpent*. He modified her plan by suppressing Tezcatlipoca and by making Huitzilopochtli the god of earth, fire, and the below; but he allowed Quetzalcoatl to remain god of wind and rain, the above, and at the same time the supreme god of the union of rain with earth. Assisted perhaps by Frazer, Lawrence adopted for his chapters "The First Waters" and "The First Rain" Mrs. Nuttall's idea of the rainy season as the time of the union of above and below, the time of fertility and spiritual rebirth. Kate's marriage to Don Cipriano in the rain is a symbolic treatment of this marriage of water and earth.

Much of the incidental symbolism, often troubling to readers of *The Plumed Serpent*, the wheel, the eye, the eight-rayed black sun, the colors of the four cardinal points and of the gods, with allowance for Lawrence's carelessness, may also be traced to Mrs. Nuttall. The morning star, another symbol of duality, associated with Queszalcoatl in Aztec legend, is mentioned by Mrs. Nuttall, but as inferior to Polaris. For her Polaris Lawrence substituted the more congenial Venus. Though Mrs. Nuttall is responsible for much of Lawrence's learning, our knowledge of his relationship with her has been limited until now to the odd and perhaps insignificant detail, revealed in a letter, that during October, 1924, he bought her a door knob.

Lawrence did not get his knowledge of the Mexican gods entirely from his friend's book. Mrs. Nuttall does not mention the goddess Itzapapalotl, with whom Lawrence was going to identify the heroine of *The Plumed Serpent* until, half way through the book, he forgot his purpose and chose another name for her. Neither does Mrs. Nuttall mention the dirt-eating goddess of love, mother of an obsidian knife, discussed by Lawrence in *Morning in Mexico*. It is probable that he read Lewis Spence's *The Gods of Mexico*,

1923, the only convenient treatment of these two divinities. This likelihood is increased by the presence in Spence's book of Aztec hymns so close in character to those in *The Plumed Serpent* as to appear to have suggested their use to Lawrence.

He was not near Mrs. Nuttall's library when he wrote *The Plumed Serpent*. His dependence upon an imperfect memory accounts for one goddess of this book, a certain Malintzi, who is not in the Aztec pantheon. She seems to be the result of a casual union in Lawrence's fancy between two persons mentioned by Prescott, Metzli the moon and Malinche the mistress of Cortes.

II.

So far, we have seen that archaeologists, anthropologists, and historians provided Lawrence with theories about animism, from which he made a primitivistic theory, and with details about ancient man and mythology which he found useful for his primitivistic novels. But Lawrence spoke with contempt of the scientific works he condescended to misuse. He said that the historians and anthropologists had no understanding of early man, that being rational and materialistic rather than intuitive their work was without value, that he knew more about ancient Egypt than its historians, more about golden boughs than Frazer. To Frazer, he said, the ram is so much mutton, the bull so much beef, but to himself, as to the priests of religions which few modern men can understand, these beasts are mysteries. His contempt did not prevent him from finding in the work of Frazer and other insensitive men ideas he could develop into what he called a new living utterance. Lawrence interpreted what he took from these materialists in a liberal and religious way. "Religion was right," he said, "and science is wrong." And in another place he added: "I have found hints, suggestions for what I say . . . in all kinds of scholarly books . . . I only remember hints—and I proceed by intuition." The direction in which he developed these hints may be explained by his reading in the occult.

Lawrence's natural enthusiasm was improved in his youth by the Primitive Methodist chapel. But during his adolescence the reading of Huxley and other scientists deprived him of a simple

outlet for his aspirations. He gloomily contemplated the wastes of materialism, he came to hate the science which had caused his misfortune, and in his despair he tried for a time to substitute Greek pantheism for the religion in which he could no longer believe. His soul found no peace, however, until he discovered theosophy, which when altered to fit his needs and combined with animism proved to be a very suitable religion. The occult and the primitive became one in his mind as in that of Mme. Blavatsky. Before 1915 Lawrence read *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine* by Mme. Blavatsky, later he read several works by Annie Besant, her disciple, and, as Mrs. Lawrence informs me, he was familiar with the work of Rudolph Steiner, the German theosophist. In 1918 he read books on occultism and magic, and during 1916 *The Occult Review*.

Theosophy, as expounded by Mme. Blavatsky, is an occult doctrine claiming to have recovered the universal belief of ancient man. This belief centers about reincarnation and the passage of souls under the law of karma around a septenary chain of worlds in seven planes; it also involves many other spiritual matters such as magic, astrology, symbolical cow worship, and demons of various orders. It is a synthesis of all the esoteric wisdom of the past, handed down in part by the initiates of the Eleusinian mysteries and by the Rosicrucians, but preserved in its purity only by certain oriental adepts. These truths once prospered in the primitive Utopia of Atlantis and now lie concealed from all but knowing eyes in the symbols of the Hindus, Egyptians, Chaldeans, Druids, and Aztecs. Theosophy, founded by Mme. Blavatsky in 1875 to recapture and cherish these truths, may be explained as one of the late nineteenth-century reactions against the materialism of Huxley and as a symptom of that love of the remote and the profound which has accompanied the romantic movement. To recent literary men like Yeats and A. E., and even Chesterton and Joyce, who had a passing and less solemn interest in it, theosophy has been so attractive as a refuge from Huxley that some knowledge of it is needed for the understanding of contemporary literature. It is natural that in his romantic flight from materialism Lawrence should also have been attracted.

Lawrence cannot be called an orthodox theosophist; for his use

of Blavatsky was as eclectic and intuitive as his use of Frazer. He had little patience with reincarnation and he even sneered in one essay at the serpent with his tail in his mouth, a symbol so important that it adorns the covers of Mme. Blavatsky's works. It ill became him to sneer, however, for he recommended the works of this lady to a friend in trouble, and his writings abound in references to the lotus, one of the deepest symbols for the adept; to seven, the numerical basis of everything; and to the mundane egg, a spiritual object dear to Blavatsky and signifying regeneration, over which Lawrence used to chuckle in his less elevated moments. Casual allusions, as for example to the Sanskrit joys of *Purusha*, *Pradhana*, and *Kala*, treated at length in *The Secret Doctrine*, show Lawrence's saturation with theosophy. Lawrence found these occult details agreeable, but his serious interest centered upon Mme. Blavatsky's idea of the primitive religious Utopia and its traces in the symbols of archaic faiths. His love of the primitive and his spiritual inclination were equally satisfied by these fancies.

The ordinary theosophist leans toward Buddha. Lawrence found Buddhism and New England transcendentalism too mechanical and ideal, as he said in several of his essays and as he told his friend Earl Brewster, the American Buddhist, whom he visited in Ceylon. Buddha and Jesus were too recent not to share with Plato that pernicious ideality which destroyed the earlier worship of nature. Buddha and Jesus were to be discarded, therefore, along with logic and the machine by a severe animist. Lawrence liked Hinduism, however, in spite of his occasional complaints, because it is more primitive than Buddhism and, as Hindu adoration of the cow makes clear, it is closer to nature. He particularly like Shiva, the phallic, destructive and beneficent third person of the trinity. Lawrence's letters to Earl Brewster show that he at least dipped into the *Vedas* and *Upanishads* and that he read several books on Hindu thought such as Coomaraswamy's *Dance of Shiva*, J. C. Chatterji's *Kashmir Shaivism*, and Manucci's history, but it is impossible to separate his Hinduism from his theosophy, for theosophy includes Hinduism as it includes yoga, which of all oriental beliefs gave Lawrence most comfort.

What the exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola are to Christianity,

Yoga is to Hinduism. It is an ancient system of physical and mental discipline with illumination or mystical experience as its end. By means of this exercise the adept awakes Kundalini, the serpent power lying coiled and dormant at the base of the spine, and sends it upward along the spine through seven centers or chakras to the top of the head and thence to God. Mme. Blavatsky includes yoga in her *Secret Doctrine* and Annie Besant has a book on it. Lawrence, who was hospitable to the old, the mystical, and the phallic, found in this department of theosophy a key to the life force and to the means by which the ancients preserved their harmony with the rest of creation. He was especially interested, as his conversations with Brewster and Mrs. Luhan reveal, in the chakras and in Kundalini, the life force. Lawrence knew something of yoga from Blavatsky, but he says in a letter to Brewster that he first became acquainted with the subject through reading *The Apocalypse Unveiled* by an author whose name he could not recall. This work, whose title he confused with *Isis Unveiled*, is *The Apocalypse Unsealed*, 1910, by James M. Pryse, the theosophist, who had instructed A. E. in the mysteries of magic, inspired him to draw occult diagrams on the floor of the Dublin Lodge of the Theosophical Society, and enabled him to see initiation scenes in the astral light. After having had his influence on English literature, Mr. Pryse moved to Los Angeles. His book describes Kundalini, the serpent force, and its rise through the lunar and solar ganglia or chakras of the sympathetic nervous system. Kundalini and the seven principal chakras were involved, he says, in the initiation into the mysteries, which embodied the esoteric wisdom common to all old religions. He finds the Apocalypse of St. John to be a symbolic account of the saint's initiation through the opening of his seven seals or chakras as Kundalini ascended. Lawrence said of this important book: "It's not important. But it gave me the first clue."

Lawrence developed Pryse's clue in his usual eclectic way in two of his most esteemed works, written in 1920 and 1921, *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious* and *Fantasia of the Unconscious*. In these works Lawrence freely adapted Pryse's system of chakras to his animistic theory of contact with the living universe, with sun, moon, trees, wives, and other creatures. To promote his ideal

of mindlessness, Lawrence omitted all chakras above the neck and otherwise corrected his author. He discussed first four, then eight chakras, though he knew they should be seven; he accepted Pryse's idea of the ganglia of the sympathetic system and his idea of their lunar and solar connection; and he enlarged Pryse's hint of the electrical nature of the life force by the aid of Mme Blavatsky's positive and negative polarity. These valuable ideas explain the favor with which Lawrence's *Fantasia* has been received.

That Pryse impressed Lawrence as much as Lawrence impressed his audience is made even clearer by his considerable debt to this theosophist for his own book on St. John, written in 1929. For his *Apocalypse*, which may seem less alarming when its origin is known, Lawrence accepted Pryse's theory of John's initiation into the mysteries, his rebirth through the opening of his seven centers and of his third eye, through the awakening of the coiled dragon or serpent of power at the base of the spine, and through its progress up the spinal way until it "flushes the brow with magnificence." The great problem of the ancients, which should also be ours, says Lawrence, was the liberation of the dragon within. Lawrence also accepted Pryse's theosophical idea that beneath the lamentable Christian surface of Revelation the symbols of pagan mysteries lie concealed. These symbols, embedded in the unconscious, the dragon, the stars, and the numbers three, four and seven, carry the mind back thousands of years "in great cyclic swoops" to the ancient universal belief. In her *Secret Doctrine* Mme. Blavatsky also interprets Revelation as one of the symbolic keys to the Utopian past. Lawrence's *Apocalypse*, based on Pryse and Blavatsky, is a theosophical tract.

Frederick Carter, the astrologer, with whom Lawrence was collaborating in his study of St. John, complained that Lawrence was too much of a "theosopher" to receive systematic astrology. Carter wrote a book to announce Lawrence's debt to himself, but a comparison of Carter's *Dragon of the Revelation* with Lawrence's *Apocalypse*, which seems to have been intended as a preface to this work, shows the reason for Carter's complaint; for though Lawrence owes something to Carter and Dupuis, his principal debt, as we have seen, is to Pryse, theosophy, and yoga. Lawrence read Carter's manuscript on dragons while he was in Mexico

in 1923, and he discussed astrology with this astrologer in 1924 and 1929, but Lawrence was interested in astrology as in all occult matters only as a possible aid to his primitive ideal, an ideal to which Carter was indifferent.

With his understanding of theosophy and animism, Lawrence arrived in New Mexico in 1923, observed the Indians at their dancing, met the Aztec gods in Mrs. Nuttall's library, and felt the religious impulse to write a novel. "Primarily I am a passionately religious man", he had said, "and my novels must be written from the depth of my religious experience . . ." *The Plumed Serpent*, written from this depth between May, 1923 and February 1925, again unites Lawrence's theosophy and animism.

The object of this novel was to show the recovery of the theosophical and animistic primitive Utopia in the present, as the object of *Apocalypse* and of *Etruscan Places* was to note its traces in the past. Mme. Blavatsky's ideal, as we have seen, was the wisdom of Atlantis, once universal, but now preserved chiefly in the myths and symbols of archaic people like the Egyptians and Aztecs. Lawrence's belief in Atlantis, corroborated by Frobenius, Nuttall, and Belt, came from Blavatsky, whose view of the Egyptians, Etruscans, Chaldeans, and American Indians he shared. The Foreword to his *Fantasia* clearly shows his theosophical position. Here he says that the ancient wisdom of Atlantis, America, and Asia was once world-wide and esoteric. After the disappearance of Atlantis, the descendants of the wise degenerated, but the Druids, Etruscans, and American Indians preserved some fragments of the truth in ritual, myth, and symbol, the only keys to the greater day. He says: "I am only trying to stammer out the first terms of a forgotten knowledge."

The pre-Aztec myth of Quetzalcoatl, like the symbols of John's *Apocalypse*, gave Lawrence an excellent opportunity to stammer forgotten wisdom to the modern world. Lawrence's hero, Don Ramon, who revived the cult of the Aztec god in Mexico with this theosophical purpose, saw ways to restore the ancient wisdom to other lands through their own national symbols, Hermes, Mithras, Igdrasil, Brahma, and mistletoe. "The mystery," he said, "is one mystery, but men must see it differently." This initiate, as he called himself, imagined a universal church of one truth and many

symbols. But the primitive wisdom seen by Don Ramon was not that of Blavatsky; rather it was the old animistic closeness to nature. Lawrence's Utopia was theosophical in origin but animistic in character. From Blavatsky he learned of the splendid past and of its keys in myth and symbol; from Jung he learned that myths were resident in the modern unconscious; and from the Indians, Taylor, and Harrison he learned the nature of the ancient wisdom which myths recall. *The Plumed Serpent* is theosophy brought up to date by anthropology and anthropology seen in the light of theosophy.

Where there is theosophy there are usually elementals, earth-bound spirits, salamanders, karma, reincarnation, the sacred seven, the Great Breath, and the sun behind the sun; *The Plumed Serpent* has them. Some of these details are to be found, for example, in the fourth hymn of Quetzalcoatl, others in the sermons following the slaughter of the wicked. Where there is theosophy there is usually yoga; *The Plumed Serpent* has it. The central theme of rebirth in this novel is treated in terms of initiation into the mysteries, as described by Pryse, especially the induction of Cipriano as the living Huitzilopochtli. And the spiritual exercises performed in the darkness of his bedroom by Don Ramon are remotely indebted to the practices of the yogi. But these details are unimportant compared with the effect of yoga on Quetzalcoatl himself.

Quetzalcoatl, the Aztec feathered snake, attracted Lawrence because he had met the old serpent symbol of cosmic, spiritual, and phallic meaning in Blavatsky, Pryse, Carter, and Jung. Lawrence's Quetzalcoatl resembles the serpents of these authorities more than that of the Aztec myth, which served merely as a clue to the deeper truth. In *The Plumed Serpent* Lawrence says through one of his characters, who is familiar with the unsatisfactory myths, that the Aztec gods had become corrupt by the time of Cortes, that they needed rebirth or reinterpretation if they were again to become useful. Lawrence's Quetzalcoatl owes much to the mythologists, especially Mrs. Nuttall, but he has been reinterpreted in the light of Lawrence's purpose and superior insight. To Lawrence the reborn Quetzalcoatl was a convenient symbol of the life force. He is distinguished by the theosophical

symbol of the serpent with his tail in his mouth and by that of the bird. These images from Blavatsky and Nuttall represent a cosmic mystery, the union of the above and the below, the sky and the earth, spirit and matter. Lawrence's Quetzalcoatl has this meaning. But he also represents Kundalini, the serpent power of yoga, whereby ancients attained manhood and contact with the living universe. Lawrence's improved deity says: "When the snake of your body lifts its head, beware! It is I, Quetzalcoatl, rearing up in you, rearing up and reaching beyond . . . to the sun of darkness . . ." "And I am not with you till my serpent has coiled his circle of rest in your belly." The orthodox Aztec might be surprised to find that Quetzalcoatl was really Kundalini, but the theosophist, knowing that Hindus and Aztecs are of one primitive faith, could not but be pleased with Lawrence's discovery.

What Lawrence called his philosophy he might better have called his theosophy. This religion, privately compounded of animism and the occult to assist his own romantic flight from the modern world, was also intended to solve our social, political, and personal problems and to end materialism by the aid of the living past. His religion may have been as useful for its believer as any, but it seems to be imperfectly adapted to ending our troubles. It is important, however, because his books increasingly depended upon it and more and more came to have the purpose and nature of illustrative tracts. Lawrence's denial of this fact is of less weight than the fact. His religion is also important because it directed his great talents away from what he knew, the life of miners, the pits, the engines, and the haystacks of his native county, to what he thought he knew. After the promise of *Sons and Lovers*, his talents were misdirected by his theory. His later works contain only hints of what he might have done. He became better as prophet than artist and as prophet he is not very good. Lawrence's later work is of most value, perhaps, to those who do not understand it.

by Geoffrey Stone

OM!

THEOSOPHY AND THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT AT BAY.

O world, thou choosest not the better part!

—GEORGE SANTAYANA.

The existence of this world is open to doubt; and there is no reason why the sun may not describe his journey along a fancied arc in an imagined heaven. Certainty is an act of faith, never a result of discourse; so that those most vociferous in defense of the mind's powers are least prolific in the use of that organ. When I call the gods to witness that I speak truth, I use a singularly appropriate rhetoric, for the witnessed fact dwells in the same doubtful realm as the witness. But, while the truth I speak may describe no object, it describes itself, and it partakes of the reality of its own existence, forcing me to accept it as an exterior fact in those moments when I would do more than contemplate it. Contemplation dissolves the world; action posits it; spirit gives no thought to the reality of the world, finding love of it a sufficient explanation. Spirit—sprung from matter and surely a finite thing—is content to range amidst the infinite variety whence it came, and whither reason tells us it returns. The mind dissociated from reality by the rigid formulae of dogma declares spirit fit to contract marriage only with the probable, and thereby takes spirit from its chosen bride, which is the fanciful. For that which will befall is of no concern to spirit; only what may befall intrigues it; its very improbability compelling the enthused eye of spirit to follow into those retreats where neither good nor evil are, nor the animal necessities that give rise to these. As none but a hateful vanity could prompt the declaration that life as we know it is the only life, so an even more hateful vanity urges the belief in a world where all values are ranged according to some ulterior end. Poets here are wiser than wise men, and the sweet accents of their songs ask

things only to be what they are. Yet less wise than wise men are those who maintain two worlds, dedicating both to an ulterior end.

It is curious that, in the name of those Indian philosophers who looked on matter as a weary evil—which they none the less enjoyed for its peculiar aspects, it is curious that in these names there are those who would weight all spirit with the especial function of matter. Or perhaps it is not curious, for man is quick to deny his most valuable faculties, if in doing so he only adhere to some dialectic proceeding from a mistaken premiss. Theosophy does not hesitate to call matter (which, in the Christian Occident, may at times mean the flesh alone) a snare and a delusion, yet theosophy is even less hesitant to ascribe to spirit all the delusions that instincts engender in matter. Instincts innately are no more prone to err than is the discursive mind or the intuitive spirit, eagerly coursing after the fleet yet always apprehended hares of essence, yet instincts are but the psyche's traditional habits, and these are often befooled when the unsympathetic world reverses its known and expected direction. Theosophy would have spirit eternally recurrent in the flux—a contradiction flying in the very face of spirit's essence; for it is the nature of spirit to rise from the conditions following on the concurrence of certain components of the existential flux, and when the flux no longer holds this trope, it no longer holds spirit. Spirit is no lonely Platonic idea immured in matter, because in the past it was cruel to little children or overfond of spiritous liquors, but is itself just such a perverse cruelty or understandable love: and it is to be derogated only when its life becomes a pattern for the psyche, and lures her from her congruous world of matter to follow paths that can never be healthily terminated. Thus theosophy, so firmly espousing actual dualism that it falls into a monism irrelevant to fact, commits a grave error, seeking to force a fluid to the tasks congenial to a solid.

I were rash indeed to proclaim my wisdom the only wisdom, for there are no Chosen People among philosophers, though it is no bigotry to say there are those ordained from birth to damnation. Wisdom is the adequacy of a description to its object; so there is an infinity of wisdoms, even as there is an infinity of standpoints from which any given object may be viewed: and the Martian astronomer could enlighten the most learned of sublunary meteor-

ologists. Despite the boundless varieties of wisdom, I am not required humbly to accept every dialectic that comes to me labelled with that sacred name: I need not bow, as before some holy shrine whose miraculous powers are ever beyond my merely mortal understanding. What is above my powers of reason I accord respect, and reserve my judgment for a possible happier day; what is beneath my powers of reason I tolerate, but the necessities of this short life allow me to do little more. All poets and prophets are possessed of esoteric knowledge, and in the fields, Parnassian or Heavenly, which they claim as their own I will gainsay no words of theirs, nor will I violate any law they may find to be operative there, for these fields I shall know only through their descriptions, or guess at in their fervor. But let no man, calling himself either poet or prophet, deny me my lamb chop at breakfast, denouncing it as an anthropophagical custom, and telling me that what I consume with such simple relish is the substance of my grandmother. The historical conjunction of events that generated the spirit of my grandmother might possibly find duplication in the atoms of lamb; but, were the flux given to so monstrous a lack of economy, the consumption of grandmothers should inevitably be attendant on animal life, and my survival demand a callousness in that direction. The psyche, whose plasticity underlies all animal existence, is called upon to adapt herself to no such condition, so that my physical welfare imposes no metamorphosis on another's spirit.

To posit any end for man other than that vaguest of certainties, death, is to restrict the flux to a human programme, and ask of it no reversals or revolutions, no shocks by which the thinking mind is startled to awareness of itself. Thus those who see life moving toward a great and final consummation, or hear the breath of Brahma each time the psyche turns at her tasks, are more rigidly mechanical than those who find a repeated effect occurs among peculiar conditions. Man lives by the courage of his convictions, smelting the ore of experience into rods by which he measures experience or coerces his fellows; but this ore shall never yield a tablet engraved with characters saying that it itself is a folly and a sham. Art is a spontaneous manifestation of habit acquired from the conditions of existence, but how shall existence impose conditions, or habit accept these, or spontaneity arise, if the flux will

admit of nothing variable? How shall time be other than an ungracious interlude and the end but something fortuitously separated from the beginning, if, besides containing it, the seed foresee the lily in all its glory? The theosophical mind will proffer no answer: romantically it knows all the world, and, if one thing deny another, it only smiles with superior wisdom. Thus art, supposedly containing the germ of its own harmony, in reality implanted with the principle of monotony, expires with the fatigue of its producers, because this is a rock no chisel can alter. Art proceeds from tradition, and the route of each succeeding day no wise man will predict from what was before: if I raise my house on sand, I forego the stability of stone, but through the long loneliness of the nights, I am rocked into a delicious slumber by its swayings on its foundations. Art is diverse and flows from its substance; poetry is a burden to the hewers of wood, but a solace to the drawers of water, who in their substance hear the mellifluous sounds that harmonize poetry with the task of the active life. So Nature, by her very latitude, proclaims an evident hierarchy, incompatible with the dogma of theosophy; and if its nether ends be chaos, who is there to deny reason to the ordered fragment? Though I issue from confusion's womb, and end as the senseless nutriment of worms, I must say: While I live, I live with beauty.

by Arthur E. DuBois

AMONG THE QUARTERLIES

THIS QUESTION OF "REGIONALISM"

THE more one thinks of American quarterlies as an isolated phenomenon in journalism, the more bewildering they become. They are bewildering for their numbers and variety. They range all the way from the *American Journal of Astrology* through the *Mark Twain Quarterly* to the fly-by-night "little" magazines of a hundred-and-one varieties commonly featuring story or poetry.

The specialist seems best served by the quarterly. The literary historian, for example, has *ELH*, *Modern Philology*, *Philological Quarterly*, *PMLA*, *Studies in Philology*; and these quarterlies in this particular field are supplemented by *M. L. N.* and by other quarterlies still more specialized: *American Literature*, *Speculum*, or *Southern Folklore Quarterly*, the last inaugurated in March of this year. A conservative estimate would place the number of quarterlies devoted to history at between sixty and a hundred¹; and of course these are supplemented by quarterlies devoted to economics, political science, sociology, history of law, of philosophy, and so on.

In fact, quarterlies are so numerous that it would be impractical to try to make even a bibliography of them. Since they come out irregularly often, and are not issued through ordinary agencies commonly, it is impossible to keep well-informed of even the best of them in any single community at any particular time—the normal income of most libraries could be exhausted on quarterly subscriptions alone. But the numerousness and variety of the specializing quarterly, even more than the numerousness and

¹See J. P. Boyd, "State and Local Historical Societies in the United States," *The American Historical Review*, XL (Oct., 1934), 10 ff.

variety of the commercial magazine, make it possible, even imperative, to judge the general quarterly by severe standards.

An acquaintance with these quarterlies starts one suspecting a kind of "quarterly mind" as distinct from a "journal," "weekly," or "monthly" mind. Accordingly, it is not surprising in the quarterly field to find Dumas Malone, of the editorial boards of *The American Historical Review* and *The American Scholar*, in the 1937 winter *Yale Review*; to find Henry Smith, of the *South-west Review*, in the *Southern Review*; R. P. Warren, of the *Southern Review*, in the *Virginia Quarterly*; R. P. Blackmur reviewing for both *Southern Review* and *Virginia Quarterly*; Charles Glicksberg with articles in *South Atlantic Quarterly* and *SEWANEE REVIEW*; Kenneth Burke as author in *Southern Review*, as subject in *South Atlantic Quarterly*.

Yet one soon discovers—to add to one's bewilderment—that the "quarterly mind" finally proves to be elusive, non-existing. The winter numbers publish names you are likely to run across almost anywhere: Bonamy Dobrée, John Dewey, Mario Praz, in *Southern Review*; Stark Young, R. P. T. Coffin, in *Virginia Quarterly*; J. W. Krutch, Pearl Buck, Glenn Frank, Peter Monro Jack, in *Yale Review*. Of course, none of the writers mentioned above as appearing in two quarterlies at once confines his activities to the quarterly.

The amount of energy spent on quarterlies, even the "little" ones, is prodigious, often expensive, ambitious, impressively designed. The major quarterlies are packed with competent, thoughtful writing. And, in the midst of it all, a few stories stand out as distinguished and an occasional article as one characterized by something like "creative thinking" in addition to thoughtfulness and judgment. The following stories in the winter numbers seem to me "naturals": E. Godchaux, "The Horn that called Bambine" in *Southern Review*; R. P. Warren, "The Christmas Gift" in *Virginia Quarterly*; Meridel LeSueur, "The Girl" in *Yale Review*, and R. E. Hartley, "Home for Christmas", and the pair of stories called "Parents" by M. G. Clark and W. H. Gerry in *Frontier and Midland*. Kenneth Burke's "Acceptance and Rejection" in *Southern Review* is an exceptional article.

Yet just as one finds a "quarterly mind" and loses it imme-

diately, so one cannot help feeling a sense of waste, perhaps a feeling of emptiness that wealth always gives. The *Southern Review* tends toward an intellectualism reminiscent variously of *The Criterion*, *The Dial*, *The Hound and Horn*, even *The American Review*. The *South Atlantic Quarterly* tends toward an antiquarianism that does not greatly distinguish it on either side from journals of history or from journals of literary history like its colleague at Duke, *American Literature*. But the elements of these and other trends are disparate, and the trends themselves rather vague. One cannot feel that one knows what to expect of the average quarterly beyond expecting nothing very unpleasant.

In short, one does not feel exactly on friendly terms with the editors. In editing, as in writing, distinction is almost synonymous with personality or character. The pleasing dinner companion is one who surprises you and entertains you but who does so only within the logic or consistency of his own temperament. The mere surpriser is a bore who wastes himself and you.

The major-general quarterlies are entertaining and stimulating but within no logic of their own. Much of their material is interesting, for example, but also merely innocuous: "Early Letters of E. A. Robinson" or "Missing All" in *Virginia Quarterly*; "Two Letters of Sarah Orne Jewett" or "With Letters from Housman" in *Yale Review*. One might expect the commercial journal to be smooth, innocuous. But, hampered though the editor usually is by editorial boards, one hopes for better, harder things of quarterlies—for births, not still-births. The difference is not between work and play but between work-and-play in or out of character. There is a sense of waste, of want of style among the quarterlies individually and collectively, of going nowhere easily, of having to remember where to look again for the rarer good things lost among the generally ordinary things. The editorial nose is a little like Coleridge's—too small to be a rudder for the face—and the face itself a little like those of Poe's heroines—not so easy to remember as the name.

One is astonished again when one considers the policy of the usual general quarterly on any particular topic or problem (say, Marxist materialism), perhaps because such considerations focus the others. For example, it is easy to associate quarterlies with

regionalism, a matter of considerable moment. Why this association should be easy I do not know. Most of the quarterlies originate outside established centers of publication. Perhaps, after all, the "quarterly mind" is a regional mind if one can define regionalism as a matter of specialty (as, for example, the hod-carrier is provincial in point of view beside the engineer or architect) or of temperament (as the dyspeptic is provincial beside the healthy, or the old maid beside the matron) or of time (as the reporter is provincial beside the philosopher or historian) as well as of place. Or perhaps one associates quarterlies primarily with journals of local historical societies or with the local pride of the Scottish critics of some of the original quarterlies like *Blackwood's*. Or maybe one senses the suburban in the quarterly because it appears rarely. In any case, the association is easy.

It is also a *propos*. Of the major quarterlies, for example, *SEWANEE REVIEW*, *South Atlantic Quarterly*, *Southern Review*, *South-west Review* and *Virginia Quarterly* belong to the South which also has its share of "little" quarterlies in and out of its colleges (*Bard*, *Better Drama*, *Blue Moon*, *Bozart and Westminster*, *Circle*, *Cycle*, *Lyric*, *Moods*, *Portfolio*, *Shard's*, *Sonnet Sequences*, *Versecraft*, *Vers Libre*), at least one of which, the newly-founded *Pseudopodia*, announces itself forthrightly as regional in policy. The South is the cradle of Agrarianism and has always been somewhat regional (superficially, state vs. nation) in its politics. Its local folk stuffs are varied and identifiable. Members of the staffs of some of these southern quarterlies have made notable contributions to an understanding of the possible influences of regionalism on literature or criticism.* Altogether it is inevitable that quarterlies be somewhat localized in points of view in such distinctive and rather self-conscious regions as The South, New England, The Midwest, The Far West.

Of course the quarterlies almost invariably describe themselves as national or international in scope and appeal—they are as apt as not to go to India to see the fakirs there. The *Yale Review* is quite as competent to go "Studying Savages in Melanesia" or begin

*Henry Smith raises some interesting regional questions in his omnibus review of local novels, "Notes on Recent Novels" in *Southern Review*. And his "New Fields for Critics: Standards versus Standardization" is significant in *Higher Education and Society: A Symposium* (Norman: U. of Oklahoma Press, 1936).

"On Understanding the English" as to know anything about Connecticut; its best story, "The Girl", is middle-west in setting. But as the SEWANEE REVIEW reveals a kind of nostalgic pride in especially Sewanee spiders, so even the most international of quarterlies comes sometimes down to its own earth, especially in its book-review sections, and might be expected to have a reasoned opinion on its relationships to its own community.

The regional articles or stories fall into classes, more or less functional in origin. The regionalist is doubtless self-conscious to begin with, wondering what to do with his hands, filled either with pride or with shame or scorn for his differences with the rest of the world. Regionalism is his attempt to escape provincialism, and divides into categories according to his manner of escape. The essential quality of regionalism is that the writer does not try to escape from his geographical locale while he is trying to escape from the self-consciousness it has forced on him. His objective is to get on top of his own world and so to achieve a tip-toe-on-a-hill feeling to inject the raw stuff of his art with. The least important types seem best illustrated in the winter quarterlies.

1. The regionalist may simply busy himself uncritically with his surroundings, not minding his hands if they are busy. The dilly-dally regionalist starts queer museums, preserves oddities to confuse the Believers-or-not with, delights in prettinesses. He is a kind of Victorian at heart and fills his parlor with local knick-knacks, lavender and old lace, and antimacassars; closes the window; and hides from the rest of the world. He is the reporter, the photographer.

Hardly any regionalist escapes being of this variety at times. His photos litter the dilly-dalliant study. As they make an album they are especially serviceable of course. And when the regionalist begins to dilly-dally in earnest he informs us greatly if not always needfully. Local-color fiction belongs by nature to this type. Informing his work with sentiment or adorning it with the picturesque, the reportorial regionalist produces art of a sort represented by "The Horn that called Bambine" by Elma Godchaux in *Southern Review* or by the ugly but curious "On Defeated Creek" in *Frontier and Midland*. "The Women on the Battlefield" also belongs to this type in *Southern Review* though it is not always easy

to distinguish examples of it from those of types 2 or 3, the difference often being one of tone. In the *South Atlantic Quarterly* "The Biography of a Slave" is of this type, as is also "Child Wonders in El Dorado", a report concerning prodigious child-actors in the early Far West. This article is in *Frontier and Midland*, where are also the worst examples of the type, specially sectioned: "The Great West: Two Interviews". Especially since the two old ladies interviewed remember nothing of any importance concerning their migration to the west, the space seems wasted. Often one feels that examples of this type are best taken care of by more specialized magazines, notably the quarterlies of historical societies.

2. Or the regionalist may lose his awkwardness by making the most of it. He will be helped by having a sense of humor and, since a critic is provincial beside the *littérateur*, the doctor of men of letters in "Acceptance and Rejection" says pertinently: "Whatever poetry may be, criticism had best be comedy." This kind of regionalist is the vaudeville performer with the extraordinarily big mouth or head or hands, who makes a strength of his weakness and acquires ease as the fat woman in the side-show gets used to being stared at. Chamber of Commerce ads are essays in this variety of regionalism. And with a certain amount of naïveté and amateur antiquarianism, the *Newfoundland Quarterly* specializes in it rather pleasantly.

The general effect of practising this regionalism is to confirm persons in their worst or best suspicions concerning themselves. There is the positive and negative side. One says, Come in, the water is fine. The other says, Stay out, this means you. The Middle West tends toward the positive, New England toward the negative. Such exclusiveness as the negative involves is often creative by stimulating rivalry, so that New Yorkers create their own historical society in opposition to Massachusetts. This kind of regionalism preserves the fakirs of India, and unquestionably they serve: the occidental luxuriant is confirmed in self-assurance by being able to visit the oriental ascetic occasionally; and in order to revalue its worldliness the world needs periodic retirements, as of Hopkins to a monastery or as of Thoreau to Walden.

In its higher reaches this kind of regionalism involves accepting one's surroundings as one's own destiny and, out of them, writing

the comedy or tragedy of one's so-doomed existence. "The Christmas Gift" by R. P. Warren in *Virginia Quarterly* and probably "The Girl" by Meridel LeSueur in *Yale Review* are illustrations of the type in excellent short stories. As they deal with southern books in southern quarterlies or with western books in *Frontier and Midland*, the book sections also illustrate the class, though the individual reviewers may exemplify other types of regionalism. The best tendency of this type is toward the epical, a quality which J. A. Clark argues for in "The Middle West—There it Lies", though he reckons its products will be tragedies. With considerable justice he suggests that present-day Western writers are inane because they acquire no folk-feeling with their surroundings or neighbors and are unwilling, as the epicist and his hero must be, to represent them. The articles of the *Southern Folklore Quarterly*, if sometimes trivially, belong to this type.

3. Or the regionalist may overcome his provincialism by escape from his present surroundings to their past. The past is finished, aristocratic, but not exclusive. It is not local or confining in the same sense that the present is. One can exclude more easily from it than from the present all those existences which make one self-conscious, just as one can include in it the universal or picturesque or other qualities of life which seem appealing.

Probably one should call this type of regionalism "romantic," but the description means little. For undoubtedly, even if only an idea or ideal, the past may seem realer and be more essential than the present. The plantation culture of the South is an instance, as Stark Young adroitly suggests in discussing Simms in "More Encaustics for Southerners", in the *Virginia Quarterly*. The escape to the past is cultural, and feeds hungers which the present, however it is faced, never can feed: it is significant that Minnesota established an historical society within two months of the meeting of its first territorial legislature, so creating the oldest institution in that state! The artist can shape or control the past more easily than the present—the more passed, the easier! In it are to be found, presumably, at least the originals of such principles or practices as one's own time needs to re-valuate.

The danger of cultivating this variety of regionalism seems to be not "romantic escape". Rather, it is the same danger that

faces the vaudevillian regionalist. For it is so much easier to "select" from the past than from the present that one is apt to select only one's own images there, becoming more and more self-made and arrogant. One risks setting oneself up as the idol of one's own cave, the Narcissus of one's pool, a Ben Gunn on Treasure Island alone, so long as to grow inarticulate in self-communion. Winifred Welles's nostalgic reminiscences of New England in the story "Lessons" from *Yale Review* illustrates the type as do several articles listed elsewhere and "The Cato and the *Nautilus*, Maryland Privateers" in *South Atlantic Quarterly*.

4. Or, reacting against the self and its community, the regionalist may set about reforming them. This variety of regionalist risks being ridden out of town on a rail and, except in an unimportant sub-species, is not very well represented in the quarterlies. Often he deserves such treatment. He also risks defeat, and often ends his regionalism by leaving town on rails for New York or Chicago or some other more urbane vicinity than his own. In "The West—There it Lies" Mr. Clark charges that western writers leave town only too readily.

As he is a traditionalist, accepting standards for reform only as others have made them elsewhere in time or space, uncritically, this regionalist tends to be reactionary and to fossilize home-cultures in their stone-age patterns: he has no sympathies with the vaudevillian but perhaps too ready sympathizes with the romantic regionalist. He is apt to be a faddist, and he is apt, accordingly, to condemn Twain for not being Melville if he is from the West or, especially, to condemn Masters for not being Eliot or Shelley. If by his own labor he bears himself to his own philosophy and thereby to his own standards, he becomes that better kind of regionalist to be noted below.

Though it attempts to reform only a concept and a concept having to do only with the past, "The Yeomanry of Dixie" in *South Atlantic Quarterly* represents the type, suggesting that the rank-and-file should be given more, the Old South scions less, credit for the achievements of the Confederacy on the field. In the same magazine, though primarily only informative, "The Dispensary Movement in North Carolina" is basically of this type. The nostalgic qualities of such stories as "Lessons" or such leanings-back toward

the aristocratic Old South as Stark Young reminds one of in "More Encaustics"—these are phases of this kind of regionalism. And it is only a step from Type 1 and "Christmas Gift" through this type to the philosophical Type 6, below.

5. Or the regionalist may escape a sense of provincialism by universalizing his little world, turning micro into macro-cosmos. One excuse for all varieties of regionalism is that, even when the writer does not, the reader may accomplish such an idealization. In "The Midwest—There it Lies", Mr. Clark recommends that the region become a symbol or illustration of larger realities, as in Yeats—that it serve, so to speak, as the vices of one's time in which merely to dress naked idealities or as the green apples to prove or illustrate, inductively or deductively, the sourness of unripe fruit. This regionalist loses himself in such democratic universalities as the man of the soil with the hoe, the man against the sky, the human race until, for instance, the midwestern pioneer in Neihardt joins the everlasting company of Ulysses or Aeneas as an "Eternal Wayfarer".

The universalizing regionalist is competent to universalize the past as well as the present and to give a kind of universal validity even to the essential differences of his community from all others. So, Whitman was equally insistent that he was a man (universal) and an American (provincial). And the leaf of grass growing on the steppes, presumably, is as essential to grasshood as the leaf growing on American plains, because it is the same with difference. As Mr. Smith has pointed out, these validated differences may be used for the critical evaluation of standards and standardizations, of course to the embarrassment of the traditionalist. I have been unable to see a copy of the winter *Southwest Review*, but at least some members of its staff are obviously competent to write or value work in this genre.

6. Or the regionalist may escape a sense of provincialism by way of philosophy which may or may not have anything to do originally with his surroundings but which may serve nevertheless to order them, forming, informing, even reforming them. It seems to me significant that, though an occasional writer may fashionably light-finger Marxism and though of course the Agrarians have access to several of the quarterlies, this type is actually

not illustrated in the winter numbers. Either reactionary or radical philosophies may produce it. And the absence of the type from the quarterlies seems to me curious because the type is traditional, à la mode. The melodramatic landlord or mortgage-holder with the black whiskers who turns poor Nell and her family out into the snow needs only to represent the capitalist or laborer, materialist or idealist, to transform a "local color" melodrama into a philosophically regional story. Many of the original local colorists accomplished this reformation themselves.

As a matter of fact, in "The Midwest—There it Lies", Mr. Clark does discuss the type more or less directly. He suggests that western writers need some sort of philosophical certainty to ground themselves on in their localities.

There is doubtless also (7) an art-for-art's-sake escape from provincialism which could be called regional. But it is a complicated type which does not seem altogether separable in function from Type 1. R. P. Blackmur verges on it in discussing "Composition in Nine Poets" in *Southern Review*. Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot (both much referred to in "T. S. Eliot and Dante" in *Southern Review*) are suspect of it, as was the late Henry James. All persons meet co-equally in the realm of the classic or of pure form. Of course this regionalist tends to be traditionalist and to lose his locale in imposing formalities upon it.

The most valuable regional work will doubtless represent several types of regionalism at once, notably 4, 5, and 6. It will probably seem epic, at least outside the fields of pure history or pure literary history. The epic hero is no mere romance lover or fighter with whose individual fate one is concerned. Instead, he has superhuman aspects because he represents his people so that their fate is his fate and because he is the instrument of some destiny bigger than himself or his neighbors, like Chance variously in Hardy or Conrad, Dreiser or Masters, his fate being therefore also the workings-out of a philosophy. The writer, of course, must have anticipated his epic hero in comprehending both his people and his philosophy. And Mr. Clark's advice to mid-western authors is therefore pointed at all regional writers.

Meanwhile, the most interesting essay on regionalism in the winter quarterlies comes under the heading of none of the cate-

gories but has bearings upon all. In "More Encaustics", Stark Young seems to suggest that the connection between region and writer is inescapable: the pure artist is a freak or monster. Moreover, as the Old South exists mainly in the mind as an idea but is and was none the less influential, so the regional influence may always be both real and ideal, just as the writer himself probably has a real and an ideal identity. The important thing is, not that a writer should be affected by his region, but that his region affect him in a productive manner. The ideal and real ego should be stimulated to laughter or tears by the real or ideal environment so that it grows. It makes little difference whether the ideal environment exists outside the mind or not; it may still serve, as illustrious superstitions, doubtful knowledges, and generous errors could serve Shelley to order his life or as loyalty to even a doomed America might serve Masters and his creature Merivale in *Domesday Book*.

In other words, the important matter is that the self be neither stifled nor inflated in its own worst, home-grown egoism. Environment, real or ideal, should not produce only a self-idealized Mrs. N—, knowing what she likes, or only an equally ingrown, self-frightened Mr. S—, knowing what he believes and prejudiced against anything not immediately measurable by such standards as money or other sensible realities. Real or ideal, instead, environment should produce persons like the "little aunt", who is ultimately creative and who asks the one thing of art that it can give, a heightening or deepening of life.

Even so, we may feel a certain condescension for the regionalist, knowing that he is likely to appear from suburban, self-conscious peripheries, where persons are apt to feel imposed-upon, starved or cheated, decadent or new, rather than from such urban centers as New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Chicago, London, or Paris. Yet it may be that the ultimate provincials are in those very urban communities because they have there lost the motive of self-questioning, self-realization, or growth. To overcome his sense of provincialism, the regionalist has to get upon his feet and move and carry his neighbors along with him. The provincial is probably only the ostrich with his head in the sand, at any rate,

if he gets up on his feet and, leaving his neighbors behind, moves to New York, London, or Paris.

Whatever the fate of the provincial may be, it does not appear that any of the major quarterlies is characted or planned consistently to make the most of regional problems or materials. Just as it seems in one breath or article to argue for a tragedy of the west and in another to argue for a comedy of the universe, in fact, the *Southern Review* has the appearance on the basis of regionalism of arguing in an article and a review for traditionalism, and in another review arguing for its opposite—for diversitarianism or change. Among the quarterlies, however, the *Southern Review* does not therefore appear to be exceptional. This fact, again, is bewildering.

by Marion Canby

WEIRD SUBLIMATION

So at last death has hunted that old she-fox to earth!
We shall not see her any more,
Pettily suspicious,
Constantly cautious,
Eyes slanted, swift-trotting hither and yon
On small and secret greeds . . .
Curious that *she* should find rebirth
In lifting grass and freely running weeds,
That she should put on
Garments of green to dance the grave-yard floor,
Rushing like a sun-wild wave
On her own rough, loveless grave!—
Passing that way, thank God we need not know
It is her withered flesh the winds so flashingly blow!

by Marion Canby

VAGRANT

I am thinking of a woman, drooping on a park-bench,
In the arms of her lover, Sleep—
What a lovely way to keep
Warm!
And, after all, what is the harm
Of sleeping on a park-bench?

If you think this bench is made of wood
Or iron, you have not understood.
The woman on this bench is a soul,
On the way to her serenely inevitable goal,
Where she will find a grander lover than Sleep,
Love!—And who is Love?
Ask the powers above!

Do not ask me:
For I have sat too often on a bench made from a tree,
And I have never found there
Anyone bright with air!—
Even Sleep, at a stirring, is gone . . .
Then I, or the woman, move on.

by Marion Canby

TO HONOR BEAUTY

It is well known that beauty invigorates
The shivering root with faith in deathlessness;
No bud can set its foot above the soil
Without the courage of this element,
Lending its brightness under mist, and cool
Assuagement of perfection when the sun
Assails the precious liquid hid in green.
It is the shaping element of earth's
Crass urgency, inducing noble growth,
Especially of that soaring plant, the soul!
Where the substance basis of good life
Is rich with sulphurous hints of potency,
Consummate petals decorate the air;
But when such glad vitality is lost
From some poor plot where souls are planted thick
(Just as in springtime from a gravelled ground
Pale blades of casual grass lead vaguely forth)
A crop of scraggled wraiths is all that lifts! . . .
Oh, gardener God, weep not too bitterly
For the so frequent failure of the soul!
There came a breeze and played upon a tree,
A willow-tree as quiet as a trance,
With golden strands strayed downward like a harp.
The sound went waving over tulip-beds
That joined a jocund tossing to the song
The breeze made. It was to honor beauty
That all united in this natural praise!

by George Coffin Taylor

A MIRROR FOR ELIZABETH

THE ENCHANTED GLASS, The Elizabethan Mind in Literature. By Hardin Craig. New York: Oxford University Press. 1936.

So superlatively great is the artistic quality of Elizabethan literature that we have been content to enjoy the literary masterpieces of the age, as it were, in spots rather than in their entirety as we do a piece of literature of our own times. When we by happy accident understand the thought of a passage we appreciate its beauty and power. Intelligent laymen and specialists have for a long time, however, felt the need of a book or books which might make it possible for an appreciative reader of today to read Elizabethan plays, novels, controversies, as one reads such things of his own day, that is against the backgrounds of the intellectual cults and thought systems which any thinking artist assumes his reader will possess. Imagine any one reading, for instance, a play of Ibsen or O'Neill without having a pretty fair idea of the forces of heredity and environment, of primitivism, evolution, the general futility of life, our temporarily assumed acceptance of the absence of free will and individual responsibility for crime, and the relative emphases and values on each of these, in relation to characters and their actions in narrative and drama. That is about the way modern man reads any of the great works of the Elizabethan age. Nor does he hesitate, after reading in such fashion, to pronounce judgments for and against them in comparison with the literature of his own time.

Craig's book has attempted to reconstruct for us Elizabethan points of view and relative emphases upon the same in the grand divisions of Elizabethan thought and feeling. It blazes most of the trails in this territory. It goes a long way towards enabling us to become perhaps as intelligent readers of Elizabethan literature as were the Elizabethans themselves. It is obvious that only by so

doing can we hope to enjoy to the full the literature of England at its high tide.

The headings of the chapters are novel and stimulating. There is a singular appropriateness in selecting the phrases for these headings in each case from the Viscount of Saint Albans who "chose all knowledge for his province", swept all the then known divisions of knowledge by way of laying the basis of his intellectual planning for the future generations of man. "The Window of Momus", for example, heads Chapter VIII, that window from which we are reminded by Bacon that we can look into the most obscure recesses of the minds of our fellow men. It teases us into thought and on into the chapter itself.

The various systems of thought and feeling which Craig sets before us for the better understanding of Elizabethan literature, as we shall see, at times seem perhaps all the more interesting because of their strangeness and odd natures. They seem also at times almost ludicrous until one lets his mental eye range over certain thought areas of certain geographical areas of Europe and America where there are at the present hour emerging and taking form cults, intellectual poses and serious thought systems as strange, weird and fantastic as were those of the middle ages or the renaissance and worshipped with just as much cocksureness and fanaticism as then.

One of the most interesting divisions analyzed by Craig is the metaphysical. The supernatural was then, as illustrated by rare treatises buried in the Huntington Library and by well known works as well, assumed by even the most outstanding intellectuals to be as real as the natural and factual. Craig's illustrations of this widespread assumption from the writings of the greatest artists of the period show the difference between what to us may be simple celestial machinery and to the Elizabethan the reality. If there is perhaps a weakness in Craig's treatment of the supernatural world in the works of the greatest of the Elizabethans, it lies, it seems to the reviewer, in his failure to reckon with the very decided possibility always that those who displayed definite skeptical tendencies often emphasized certain supernatural points of view in order to keep their heads on their shoulders. Says Montaigne in one place, "I subscribe to everything dictated by the Catholic

Church." Says he in another place, "I speak truth but not my bellyful."

In his chapter, "The Nature and Condition of Men", by means of technical treatises and passages from great literature of the period, Craig reconstructs for us the Elizabethan's explanations of his own mysterious being, and elucidates the main hypotheses advanced by the psychologists or "natural philosophers" to account for man's interesting and amazing behavior. Exactly how man as such was supposed to be constituted, of what "elements" he was composed, is very thoroughly inquired into in order to make natural and intelligible the extraordinary goings-on in what was then thought of as "this little kingdom" man. How the sovereign of that "kingdom" should be man's ruling faculty, reason, how the passions are always ready to start a rebellion against the best elements in man's nature, is made clear. The general assumption of this scheme of explaining man is shown to underlie almost every reference to man in the prose and poetry of the period. The effects of the *ungoverned* passions on man's body, on his facial lines, on his entire system of gestures, on his health, on his moral being within, the dramatists drew upon as splendid stuff for tragedy and for comedy. It was only by some such method that the drama could reveal in infinite variety the perturbation of the mind, the central stuff of tragic fact. Time and again Craig throws a light peculiarly Elizabethan upon passages which we all think we know and understand but do not. It was just because the "elements were so mixed in Brutus" that his life for example "was gentle" and "that the world might stand up and say, this was a man", a perfect man.

Two chapters will serve as examples of how valuable a contribution the book makes to the scholar and to the modern thinker. Both scholar and thinker may derive much profit from them. Where the critic, artist and thinker happen to be combined in one reader these chapters will prove most delightful. Chapter VI, "The Well of Democritus", is concerned with the Elizabethan's reliance upon logic and his practical and literary uses of it. To an age given as little to its use as ours this chapter is of most extraordinary interest. At the centre of this discussion is the great humanist and logician, Ramus, who suffered the penalty of

following reason, at the Massacre of St. Bartholomew. Marlowe transfers him from history to his play, *The Massacre of Paris*.¹ How Ramus was loved and followed by Sidney, Craig emphasizes. How he was redone by Milton is known. Craig stresses his immense contribution to the literature of controversy and to literature as a fine art in Elizabethan England. The treatment of logic developed by citations from the great writers like Shakespeare gives additional brilliance to passages some of us already know as brilliant. His illustrations from the writers of comedy illustrate how often the stage fools are masterful logicians and how a dignified logical statement of trivialities makes comedy almost sublime. Chapter XIII, "The Eloquence of Persuasion", deals with the terrible power of rhetoric when superimposed upon the steel structure of logic. When the proper combination is effected of logic and rhetoric, the result is a creature which Elizabethans assumed to be absolutely irresistible. No power on earth can stand up against it, this eloquence of persuasion. To the Elizabethan mind, man, imperfect as he is, has yet within him a divine faculty, reason, which as Milton says is God. Once that is reached through logic plus rhetoric a result must follow immediately. Hence the passages in the drama of the period which present changes of mood to us today unnatural in their suddenness. His example from *The Honest Whore* is excellent—a prostitute amenable to reason is immediately converted. Just as good, is the violent shifting back and forth of the mob swayed by Antony who can make, when needs be, the worse appear the better reason. The Elizabethan assumption of the immediate effect of the Eloquence of Persuasion accounts, too, as shown by Craig, for the style of the pamphleteers and, may I add, for the number of the pamphlets. Milton seems to feel sure in his great prose tract, the *Areopagitica*, that an appeal to reason is bound to win the day, that as even the King in *Hamlet* admits "you cannot speak of Reason to the Dane and lose your voice." This faith in the efficacy of the appeal to reason on the part of Elizabethan youth, the belief in the power of learning above all powers, the acceptance as a fact that "thou canst not touch the freedom of my mind", suggests a contrast between youth being educated then and now. Threatened as we are

¹Suggested by W. L. Moses.

by the danger of a throwback to the medieval manner of getting things done in a hurry or not at all, these excursions through the mind of the Renaissance may do us harm. Certainly they will bring to our aesthetic appreciation of the greatest literature of England a more intelligent understanding of it.

by D. S. Staines

ELIZABETHAN BOURGEOISIE

MIDDLE-CLASS CULTURE IN ELIZABETHAN ENGLAND. By Louis B. Wright. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press. 1935. 733 pp.

Mr. Wright has written a useful and significant book. His own statement offers a clue to a fair evaluation of *Middle-Class Culture*. He writes: "I have attempted little more than a survey of the materials that reflect the mind of the middle class." He hopes that his book may "make possible the writing of a history of culture that does not neglect the mind of the average citizen in the English Renaissance." This volume more than fulfills the expressed purpose of the author.

His method of procedure has been to study the considerable body of "surveying literature written for or by plain citizens", and from this study to note the social, economic, intellectual, and ethical implications as to the middle class. By "middle class" the author means the homogeneous social group made up of merchants, tradesfolk, and skilled craftsmen, and bound by the common tie of interest in business profits. In treating this group the author

presents a series of chapters dealing with such topics as the concern over learning, the literary taste, the demand for handbooks offering short-cuts to self-improvement, or lessons in diligence and thrift; the interest in foreign language and literature, in science, in the drama and stage.

Stated in general terms, the author's conclusion is that the middle class of the Elizabethan period developed a way of life, a code of ethics, and a set of social ideals—ideals, which, crystallizing in the seventeenth century, are still very powerful in English and American life. This general conclusion most probably could be supported by evidence from sources other than the books which were popular among the bourgeoisie. Such support, indeed, the various inferences should have in order to convince one of their general validity. There is need not only of other types of evidence but, also, of more satisfactory proof than the author offers that the ideals expressed in the books examined are thoroughly representative of the middle class.

Here, of course, is one of the difficulties that Mr. Wright has had to face; and it seems to the reviewer that the author has not entirely overcome the difficulty. Two examples will make clear my meaning. The author quotes (p. 283) what he regards as a typical passage from Pickering's *The Whole Treatise of the Cases of Conscience* (1606). This was a very popular book, and one which Mr. Wright believes to have been very influential "in giving form to the ethical opinions of plain people." But the quoted excerpt, on wholesome recreations, corresponds almost item for item to discussions of pastimes prescribed for young men of noble families in Elyot's *Governour* (1531), in the anonymous *Institution of a Gentleman* (1555), in the *Basilikon Doron* (1607), and in other books written obviously for the upper classes.

The second example is in the statement (p. 287) that "printed sermons in the first four decades of the seventeenth century emphasize the necessity of respect for authority." The explanation of this recurrent emphasis in the sermons is to be found, according to the author, in the desire of the commercial classes for "freedom from civil strife and national security." For these classes, presumably, the ministers were spokesmen. One may inquire whether the stress on obedience to authority was not traditional. Cer-

tainly, this note was prominent in the *Governour*, and in many other books prior to the seventeenth century—books written, not for tradesmen, but for young noblemen. The ideas then as to wholesome recreations and deference to authority were not peculiar to the middle class, and would of course not constitute a basis for generalization about that class.

Besides the slight tendency to inadequately supported generalization, there are in the text a few references to books and authors which might be misleading. The references to Agrippa (p. 147n.) and Barclay (p. 439) are, in their context, likely to give a wrong impression. Of course the *De Incertitudine et Vanitate*, etc., is not a book of quotations; nor is the *Shyp of Fools* a book of roguery. The statement (p. 553) that Batman "did little more than modernize Trevisa's Bartholomaeus" needs qualification. Actually, Batman added hundreds of items. Some of the additions he starred; many more he did not star, and did not acknowledge. He drew from Elyot's *Castle of Health*, from Cooper's *Thesaurus*, and from other Renaissance sources.

But minor shortcomings should not blind us to the positive merits of Mr. Wright's book. To say that it is not a definitive history of middle-class culture in the period is not to contradict the author's own claim. It does present much material which is invaluable to the historian. No one has, I think, examined first-hand and described in concise manner so considerable a number of Elizabethan and Jacobean books which, though popular in their day, have been for almost three centuries neglected or even unknown.

Middle-Class Culture is stimulating and useful to the researcher. It suggests leads for many other studies and affords basic information. Suppose, for example, one wishes to know what, in the Tudor period, was written on medicine, on herbs, on natural history, on travel, on marriage and domestic relations, on letter-writing, on the study of foreign languages, or on any one of a score of other subjects. I know of no more expeditious beginning than that of consulting the Index of *Middle-Class Culture* and following the leads there given.

The proof-reading of the text and the checking of titles of books (The titles are numerous) have been done with scrupulous

care. An excellent index with ample cross-references, and a select bibliography contribute to the general utility of the text.

This is a volume so wide in range of information about the less well-known authors and books from 1550 to 1650, and of such general usefulness that students of the Tudor-Stuart periods may well be grateful to the author.

by William H. MacKellar

SHARE CROPPERS.

THE COLLAPSE OF COTTON TENANCY. By Charles S. Johnson, Edwin R. Embree, W. W. Alexander. Chapel Hill. The University of North Carolina Press. 1935. Pp. 81.

This little volume is the outcome of investigations by a corps of students under the direction of Dr. Rupert E. Vance and his colleagues of a Department of the University of North Carolina.

It presents a fairly accurate picture of the conditions existing among the Cotton Tenants of the South and conclusively establishes the fact that "The squalid condition of the cotton raisers of the South is a disgrace to the Southern people". It is quite true that "They stay in shacks thousands of which are unfit to house animals" and that "The cotton tenant's standard of living approaches the level of bare animal existence". But these conditions do not appear as the "Collapse" of any system that might have been no collapse. The existing conditions are simply those which originated when cotton began to be raised by free instead of slave labour. They arose from necessity. They were bound to exist if cotton was to be raised at all after the collapse of the slavery system, and the trouble is that instead of undergoing some modi-

fication, they have remained unchanged. The title of the book is therefore misleading in that it implies that something about the system of cotton tenancy has broken down. On the contrary all the evils with which the system was born have been perpetuated from their incipency, and it is a fact that a similar study made as long ago as sixty-five years would have shown identical conditions. To properly account for them, it must be remembered that upon their return from a devastating war southern planters had to work with recently emancipated slaves with whom it was practically impossible to set up any ordinary business relations. These ex-slaves were both financially and economically incapable. Of course also they were destitute and thus completely dependent upon their former masters. This brought the paternal relation in which they looked to the white man for food, clothes, and shelter just as they had done in slavery. Having no judgment of their own, they became subject to the white man's judgment, and the latter had no light cross to bear in his work of taking care of them. Besides this it must be remembered that the planter had no means with which to support the negro during the making of the crop, and was consequently compelled to borrow at often ruinous rates the necessary funds. The planter bore the risk of the business, and put his land in jeopardy with every crop. Thus cotton tenancy originated, thus it has been and thus it is today: there is nothing new about it.

As for "The way out" offered by the investigators, it need only be said that it amounts to a change of landlords. It is simply to substitute the United States Government for individuals, and to substitute government funds for private capital. But it must be realized that every tenant would thus become practically a ward of the government, and subject to "Service agencies set up by regions and local areas to supervise, guide and aid the new homesteaders." In short, the government would go into the cotton raising business, control the land and also the tenant. Without discussing the merits of such collectivism, it is sufficient to point out that its success would depend upon the ability of the government agencies to change shiftlessness into dependability, and upon the discovery of some new wellspring of taxation to support the project while this protean change is being effected.

by Robert A. Newdick

ROBERT FROST SPEAKS OUT

A FURTHER RANGE. By Robert Frost. N. Y.: Henry Holt. \$2.50.

Those simple readers who expect a poet early to set his course and always thereafter to steer that course unswervingly will be somewhat disappointed in Robert Frost's latest book, for with firm if unuttered insistence, symbolically made clear in the dedication, in *A Further Range* he lifts up his eyes to other than the customary hills and in characteristic metaphor speaks out even on such hitherto unwonted subjects as government and religion.

No sluggard, and in crisp couplets of iambic trimeter as effective as a rapid succession of left hooks, in "Departmental" he goes to the ants for his funereal parable on regimentation, restraining himself in sharp conclusion to the tellingly litotic exclamation:

It couldn't be called ungentle.
But how thoroughly departmental.

(Some admirers will regret that the sophisticated connotations of "frightfully", the adverb first employed, gave way in revision for book-publication to the more suave "thoroughly".) In "To a Thinker", a title originally extended on editorial supplication by the phrase "in Office", he says his say—lightening it with an abundance of sub-malicious humor—on glib-tongued political opportunists.

Obviously the most notable of the pieces in which Frost provocatively projects his philosophy with regard to the problem of the individual and society is "Build Soil", a "political pastoral" spoken at Columbia University, May 31, 1932, that is, before the national party conventions of that year. Much like the title-poem in *New Hampshire*, "Build Soil" is essentially conversational, Frost talking as only Frost can talk, searchingly, socratically, consecutively, though here, in the character of Tityrus, with Meliboeus for a foil, and, throughout, with more marked com-

pactness and point. The old-new emphasis is, of course, on the greater strength of individualism:

I bid you to a one-man revolution—
The only revolution that is coming.
We're too unseparate out among each other—
With goods to sell and notions to impart.

We congregate embracing from distrust
As much as love, and too close in to strike
And be so vert striking. Steal away
The song says. Steal away and stay away.
Don't join too many gangs. Join few if any.
Join the United States and join the family
But not much in between unless a college.

Other pieces which might well be spoken of in connection with Frost's views on government and problems in which government has lately taken a hand are "The Old Barn at the Bottom of the Fogs", "A Roadside Stand", and several of the illuminating flashes labelled "Ten Mills" (of which, in quiet fun, there are eleven), particularly "Precaution". As with Archibald MacLeish's recent *Public Speech*, neither communists nor fascists will find their kinds of propagandistic utterance in *A Further Range*, but with regard to Frost the volume ought to lay once and for all the absurd strawman representations of such straining thesis-critics as Granville Hicks and Michael Gold.

Beliefs and convictions, religious and quasi-religious, in terms of personal philosophy, find ample expression through all of Frost's books. In the present book, for those who care, the focus is sharpened suggestively in such moving poems as "Desert Places," "Lost in Heaven," "Neither Out Far Nor In Deep", and, perhaps least mistakable, in "The Strong Are Saying Nothing":

There may be much or little beyond the grave,
But the strong are saying nothing until they see.

Which incidentally may be read as in part an answer to such former wastelanders as are now scurrying to shelter under the doubtfully almighty wing of authority.

As Frost grows older his emphases naturally shift perceptibly from the lyric left to the more meditative right, yet the familiar Frost remains to cheer and delight the pattern-squirrels, humor-

ously and wisely in "The Gold Hesperidee", whimsically and thoughtfully in "Two Tramps in Mud Time", and in "Moon Compasses" with an intimate and perfect lyric the peer if not the superior of the already classic "Fire and Ice" and "Nothing Gold Can Stay".

by Lodwick Hartley

HOWARD M. JONES'S SOUL

THEY SAY THE FORTIES. By Howard Mumford Jones. New York: Henry Holt & Company. 1937. Pp. 73. \$1.75.

The English department at Harvard is one in which Professor Robert Hillyer can write clever verse letters to Professor Robert Frost and get them published in *The Atlantic Monthly*. In Cambridge versifying seems contagious. At any rate, Professor Jones signalizes his first year of connection with a distinguished faculty by publishing a slender volume of verse that will be read with pleasure especially by those who knew him at Chapel Hill, where he taught English literature with grace and power, made a monumental study of French and American culture, ostensibly hobnobbed with no communists, and wrote no novels or plays about tenant farmers. Chiefly a collection of sonnets, the book flies into the face of few poetic traditions. It never offers great poetry, but it does contain some good poetry; and for the most part it proves indubitably that the musings of a professor past forty can be both charming and stimulating when neatly packed into octets and sestets. One can hardly say of Mr. Jones's sonnets what Miss Babette Deutsch (paraphrasing Ezra Pound's pronouncement on himself) said of Miss Millay's: since they are twenty years behind

the times, they find a ready audience. Although poetically and politically Mr. Jones is a reactionary rather than a revolutionist, he often succeeds in making his sonnets comment vigorously on problems of existence in this brave and incredible new world.

It is not exactly a matter of putting the cart before the horse to discuss the last thing in the book first. "Heartbreak" is a sonnet sequence that Mr. Jones apparently wrote at the tender age of thirty-two or three. It won the prize of the Poetry Society of Virginia in 1926 and appeared in 1928 as a part of a section labeled "Journeys End in Lovers' Meeting" in Dean Addison Hibbard's "The Lyric South." Since the time of the composition of this sequence, both the world and Mr. Jones (as the later sonnets suggest) have changed appreciably. "Heartbreak," the record of a love beautifully and strangely frustrate, belongs, I am afraid, to the school of Miss Millay.

The newer sonnets sound not at all like those of our "female Byron." Instead, through them one hears the swishing wings of that expatriate Harvardian archangel (if all that be managed in one breath), St. Thomas à Eliot. Like Eliot, Mr. Jones is keenly conscious of things that make the post-war world a Wasteland. Like Eliot, he resorts to bitter portraiture to express the madness and crassness of modern existence. (Mr. Thersites Blach of Sonnet VI is plainly descended from Eliot's Sweeney and Bleisteins.) Like Eliot, he employs the trick of distorting quotations (a device that somebody should begin discouraging) to shock his readers into attention. The famous opening lines of a hymn rising out of the torture and devotion of William Cowper become:

God moves in a mysterious way and odd
His wonders to perform.

(If colleague Professor John Livingston Lowes delves into the poet's deep well of consciousness, he will probably adduce as another source an astounding title of a few years ago, "How Odd of God.") Shakespeare and Ben Jonson are invoked for an ironical modern idyll:

This too too solid flesh melts to a blade:
Leander swims the Hellespont: drink to me
But with thine eyes and I will pledge with mine:
Mr. Caliban is buying Miranda her wine:
And pawing Amaryllis in the shade,
Drunken Orlando hiccoughs on her knee.

John Donne's exquisite

I long to walk to some old lover's ghost,
Who died before the god of love was born:

sings beneath

But do not meet meanwhile with your own ghost
Who died before the god, Success, was born.

Eliot's penchant for laying violent hands on the liturgy is reflected in Sonnet X:

We have committed adultery, we have committed
Fornications, we have left undone
That which we should have done, and we have done
Unspeakable horror.

But the book is not a patchwork of paraphrases. After flirting with such a precarious platitude as "They say the forties are the dangerous ages," Mr. Jones sets about a fascinating subjective analysis of the period of life about which Mr. Pitkin has recently been cheaply optimistic. The sonnets are by no means all of a piece. In no very strict sense are they a sequence. Their changing thought pattern is in keeping with the uncertainty with which the poet looks upon life. Forty is an age when

On certain ships the crews are singing psalms,
On others they mutiny for better wages.
Some boats veer round and round like squirrels in cakes,
And their passengers get drunk, with subsequent qualms;
Some seek the tropics with their quiet palms,
And some, the bracing north where the tempest rages.

Mr Jones's generation of the forties is the khaki-clad generation of 1917, and the bounds of its consciousness are the "bellow" of the first Roosevelt and the "croon" of the second. Looking out upon a world of fascism and communism, the poet is conscious of the irony of saving the world for democracy. Of his generation

... some are dead, in France, and some, they say,
Are crippled or mad, the better put away,
And some stay home (the children have the car).

Yet others make obeisance to the fat gods of Success and get drunk on Saturday nights in country clubs:

... Hemingway has taught us we were tragic,
 And Faulkner has informed us we were queer,
 And Mr. Eliot with destructive magic
 Decoyed us to the Wasteland, and we're here;—
 Is it so strange we feel our isolation,
 Hung midway between madness and damnation?

Maintaining an urbane poise in pessimism, the sonnets show a marked nostalgic yearning for lost youth and, like most poetry even remotely metaphysical, a preoccupation with death. The spectres of communism and fascism stalk a little melodramatically through the sonnets. The poet sees

Humorless Noahs building communal arks
 To save us when the flooding waters run.

There may be more naïveté than urbanity in the wishful thinking that "We will not take the Roman way to Rome," in the spacious laissez-faire logic of "Torture and beauty are His, and so is fate," and in the attempt to answer the Socialists in a couplet à la Ogden Nash:

A few unrepentant old sinners wonder if Marx.
 Also explains the unsocialized pairs in the parks.

But if Mr. Jones seems to be a champion of old-fashioned democracy (whatever that is), he is by no means a propagandist. He is essentially one who is profoundly dissatisfied with the solutions that the world has offered for its problems. Again like Mr. Eliot, who escaped from the Wasteland by taking the veil, he is included to find his greatest hope for certainty not in social philosophy but in the Faith. His few sonnets voicing this hope are of great beauty and sincerity.

Even in a long review I have not done justice to this very short book. Almost every sonnet cries out for discussion or quotation. The sonnets in which the poet presents himself as a popular lecturer and as a propounder of aphorisms to his undergraduate classes are remarkable for their devastating candor. There is more than cleverness in the sonnet in which Mr. Jones traces the history of his generation through popular songs. The poems between the two sonnet groups leave me cold. One notable exception is "Examinations, Survey of English Literature, Course 24," an English teacher's charming cry of despair.

by George P. Faust

SACRILEGE, NOT SUGARED

MORE POEMS. By A. E. Housman. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1936. xiii and 73 pp.

A. E. HOUSMAN: A SKETCH TOGETHER WITH A LIST OF HIS WRITINGS AND INDEXES TO HIS CLASSICAL PAPERS. By A. S. F. Gow. New York: The Macmillan Company & Cambridge, England: At the University Press. 1936. xiii & 137 pp.

Neither *More Poems* nor Mr. Gow's sketch has done A. E. Housman much service. The blame for the failure of *More Poems* must rest ultimately on the poet himself, for his curious last-minute compromise with the traditions of authorship. When *Last Poems* was published, it seemed clear that Housman had set for himself high standards: he was presenting to the world only his best work, in two slim volumes, after it had been subjected to his own severe criticism. From the fact that *Last Poems* included poems written before the publication of *A Shropshire Lad*, it is evident that Housman was concerned not only with the spelling and punctuation of the second volume, but also with the selection of poems to be included. The more mediocre poems were to be strictly suppressed, partly because Housman was naturally anxious to be judged only by his best and partly, I imagine, because it is precisely the mediocre poems which reveal most clearly an author's ideas and technique. Certainly Housman did not encourage snoopers, and certainly many of us, perhaps mindful of the published mediocrities of Wordsworth and others, were lost in admiration for the man who had the courage to publish under so final a title as *Last Poems*.

The event has proved that our admiration was misplaced. Housman's will, as quoted in the Preface to *More Poems*, allowed his brother to publish "any poems which appear to him to be completed and to be not inferior to the average of my published poems." Being blissfully ignorant, I assume the provision was there to guard against the loss of any distinguished poem written after the

publication of *Last Poems*. It would be interesting to know the date of the will. But Mr. Lawrence Housman, who must naturally have been fearful of destroying a creditable poem, chose to follow a precedent, set by the poet himself in *Last Poems*, of printing poems written prior to the previous volume. He apparently even went so far as to publish poems that antedate *A Shropshire Lad* and which therefore must have been rejected by their author in making up *Last Poems*.

The result has on the whole been unfortunate. All the poems are Housman in good vein, as far as one can judge who has yet to see a really poor poem he wrote, and a few of them Housman himself might have printed. But the volume as a whole adds nothing to his stature as a poet. It will be of interest to all who like his poetry, and of especial interest to those who are interested in how a poet's mind works. Some of the poems, ringing again the changes of his other volumes, give more forthright expression to the ideas which dominated his poetical output, but for that very reason they may not be such good poems as those we previously knew. For example,

I promise nothing: friends will part;
All things may end, for all began;
And truth and singleness of heart
Are mortal even as is man

states explicitly the essential theme that is implicit in "Is my team ploughing" from *A Shropshire Lad*.

If I am right about the temper of *More Poems*, it will be the least important volume as poetry, but the most important to the scholars who seek to trace the origins and development of a poet's thoughts. Mr. Gow's sketch of Housman makes me certain that the dissection would be disagreeable to Housman, classical scholar though he was. No, from Housman's point of view, I am quite sure that the price he will pay for this volume is too high. He has lost a part of his seemingly indestructible aloofness from scholarly criticism.

Of Mr. Gow's book I am not qualified to say much. It is of considerable value, bibliographically speaking, though Mr. Gow several times warns his reader that the bibliographies are not complete. The sketch, which is of the most general interest, seemed

to me a competent account of a scholar's career, leavened by Mr. Gow's personal friendship with the scholar, but it touched only too briefly the poet I know. Mr. Gow, possibly because of his reticence but more probably because of the reticence of his subject, disclaims real intimacy with Housman. Consequently, the sketch is likely to disappoint those who are interested in details about the poet—the events of his life and his reactions to them. Housman's scholarship, which is Mr. Gow's main concern, may be more important than his poetry (I should bet on the poetry, even if I knew I were going to lose), but it is less apposite than, say, Burns's farming, except as his knowledge of classical literature affected his English style.

Mr. Gow's greatest contribution, perhaps, is to indicate how hard Housman worked to assure himself an immortality he had no faith in (cf. *More Poems*, XLV). The feeling one gets from the sketch is that he fagged at his scholarship with something of the ambition of that Elizabethan sonneteer, William Shakespeare, but without Shakespeare's assurance. If it is true that he pinned his hopes of immortality mostly on his scholarship, it seems probable at this date that he will be best known for something else, the poetry he thought secondary, as Shakespeare by the plays he thought ephemeral.

However, it is reasonable to guess that Housman's living emphasis of his scholarship was a kind of modesty—I am even inclined to say false modesty. It is belied by his concern for *Last Poems* and by the poem that stands at the head of *More Poems*. If he had thought his poems of not much account, or not likely to live, I wonder if his self-criticism would have been so severe, or if he would have left orders for the destruction of his unpublished poems. He must have felt, as I feel, that he was among the English poets.

by *R. W. Babcock*

THE ORIGINAL ZIEGFELD

SIR WILLIAM DAVENANT, POET AND VENTURER, 1606-1668. By Alfred Harbage. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1935. Pp. xix 317.

No one need apologize for the attention Dr. Harbage gives to the founder of the modern English theatre. Such a man as Davenant, on this basis alone, should command our interest at any moment, and he gets his just due in this excellent new biography.

Harbage's thesis is that Davenant "was a venturer in the realm of life and literature". By adopting a strictly historical point of view Harbage defends Davenant's amazing adventures at home and abroad and in literature and the theatre from the patronizing condescension of both Davenant's contemporaries and modern scholarship. This point of view appears particularly in the Shakespeare chapter and the final chapter on "Fame", but it is evident throughout the book, as, for instance, in the interpretation of the humorous attitude of the times toward the disease that deprived Davenant of his nose. "In a word," says Harbage, "Davenant should be, and has not been, read with a sympathy for and understanding of his times" He sums up Davenant's diphrelatic career brilliantly in one paragraph (pp. 3-4), closing with "—he more than any other one man proved the expediency of women actors and of scenery in the public theatre and gave us our modern picture-frame stage". No more is needed to make us read about this man, who did all this in spite of the fact that Tom Killigrew, his rival, had far greater favor with Charles II.

Structurally, the book is divided into two sections, the first, consisting of six biographical chapters, being connected with the critical study of Davenant's works (Chap. VII-XI) by a clever "Interchapter", which serves as a thesis for the last five chapters. With regard to the chief cruxes of Davenant's life, Harbage throws out the Shakespeare myth, straightens out the war service with considerable new material, emphasizes the poet's Royalist

staunchness, rejects the Milton myth, counts up Davenant's three wives much more carefully than they have ever been added up before, and everywhere develops the poet's relative decency as compared with the general indecency of the times in which he lives. Davenant apparently seems to have been the original "hard-luck guy": "It was his fate," says Harbage, "to fall into the hands of the enemy at unseasonable moments" And these enemies certainly had a good time with his nose: when a motion was passed in Parliament to hail him before justice, "a news sheet issued the next day reported that 'some gentlemen, out of pitty, were pleased to let him have the Noes of the House, because he had none of his own'".

The "Interchapter" divides Davenant's works into two groups, as "light and realistic" versus "serious and fanciful", or "his lighter vein" versus "His serious vein". This distinction, in the light of Hobbes's famous contemporary antithesis of fancy or wit versus judgment or reason, is not so easy to apply to the succeeding chapters: compare Chapter IX, which is labelled "Wit and Fancy" but which discusses the serious tragedies and serious heroic plays, among other things. However, the analysis of Davenant's verse in Chapter VII is stimulating: "Davenant could write any type of verse he cared to". And the discussions of the Masques and the *Siege of Rhodes* are both important and valuable. All the way through the book one gets a startling impression of Davenant's boldness in striking out with innovations, especially in the theatre, when he was hounded "as a debtor, as a Royalist suspect, and as the manager of an illicit theater".

The weaknesses of the book are largely errors of judgment or bias. Harbage distinctly slights the Preface to *Gondibert* though he calls it "one of the most important critical essays of the seventeenth century." He is vague on the American expedition and even vaguer on Davenant's possible shift to Catholicism (perhaps no reliable evidence was forthcoming). He never refers to A. H. Nethercot's important work on Cowley or to Allardyce Nicoll's analysis of Shakespeare adaptations in *Dryden as an Adapter of Shakespeare* (they are in neither his bibliography nor his Index), yet his whole Chapter VI is something of a rehash of Hotson. Davenant's obvious cleverness in the theatre campaign (p. 126)

is hardly consistent with Harbage's remark a few pages later that "There was a certain guilelessness about him" (p. 135). Incidentally, why not identify Lisle's Tennis Court with Lincoln's Inn Fields once in a while? Was not *Love and Honour* called *The Courage of Love* in 1634 and not renamed till 1649 (see pp. 54 and 230)? And why be so biassed against Charles II as to call him an "inebriate young slacker" and "the man who exhumed and quartered the corpse of Oliver Cromwell"? Arthur Bryant would have given Harbage a different idea of Charles. But of course it is all done to build up Davenant as a hero. And hero he is, in many ways.

The scholarship throughout is of course excellent—see the footnote on p. 175, for example, and the Bibliography. The book is well written, well printed, and very well edited. One leaves it with a far better impression of Davenant; in fact, he becomes almost one of us, for as Dr. Harbage remarks with regard to the new actresses: "Probably all that was required was youth, beauty, and a good speaking and singing voice; the manager himself essayed to teach the art of acting", and "Davenant was a judge of feminine charm"! The original Ziegfeld!

by Merrill Moore

RATS, LICE, AND HISTORY

RATS, LICE, AND HISTORY. Being a Biography of Typhoid Fever. By Hans Zinsser. Little, Brown, & Company. \$2.75.

It is with Pareton respect for the influence on epidemics in political evolution that Dr. Zinsser approaches his subject. The book is professedly a biography of typhus fever, but in reality it embraces more indeed. The story of typhus is postponed from

chapter to chapter with grave assurances that the preliminaries are indispensable, and there are pleas for patience from the reader. There are apologies later for having gone so far afield, with charming discourses on poetry, religion, war, the origin of life, and the shaping of history by epidemics. The "modern school of key-hole biographers" who have burnt their fingers with "Freudian high explosives" are capably squelched, and the poetic prose of Gertrude Stein is compared with the incoherent ramblings of a psychiatric female. Art in its relation to science is discussed, and they found to be very close one to the other in method but not material; since art involves the observation of data which appeals to the emotions, while science involves that observation which appeals to the reason.

The theme of the book is the influence of infectious diseases "upon the fate of nations, indeed upon the rise and fall of civilization". "Typhus, with its brothers and sisters—plague, cholera, typhoid, dysentery, has decided more campaigns than Caesar, Hannibal, Napoleon, and all the inspector-generals in history." A commercial civilization like our own might have been established several thousand years earlier had not Rome lacked all knowledge of sanitation. The pestilences which raged in the Roman empire from the first century to the sixth certainly must be considered as one of the factors in its downfall. Of the magnificent army of over half a million men which Napoleon had mobilized for the Russian campaign, but a handful of disease-survivors were left after the retreat from Moscow. Dysentery and Typhus had broken the power of the great Corsican. In November 1914 a terrific epidemic of Typhus flared up in Serbia, and the Austrians, for this reason, were fearful of invading Serbia at this time, the last six months during the most critical period of the World War. Military operations, therefore, were largely confined to a short bombardment of the railroad station in Belgrade at about four o'clock in the afternoon, during which everyone stayed away from the trains. "Typhus may not have won the war, but it certainly helped."

Surrounded by generals, wars, epidemics, the lowly louse appears in Chapter IX, and runs away with the show. The author is highly indignant that so important and dignified an animal as

the louse should be made the subject of "raucous humor by the ribald." We are informed that although lice have now sunk to the state of bourgeois parasitism, they spring from a noble stock of lice which was once "free and liberty-loving." Lousiness was universal among all classes of people during the middle ages. When Thomas a Becket was murdered, he was laid in Canterbury Cathedral to await burial upon the following day. The archbishop was dressed in an extraordinary collection of clothes, some nine garments, one upon the other. As the body grew cold, the vermin that were living in this multiple covering started to crawl out,—“The vermin boiled over like water in a simmering cauldron, and the lookers-on burst into alternate weeping and laughter.” The question of scratching and lice were serious problems even in the highest society. Dr. Zinsser quotes Reboux on the education of a princess of France in the middle of the seventeenth century—“One had carefully taught the young princess that it was bad manners to scratch when one did it by habit and not by necessity, and that it was improper to take lice or fleas or other vermin by the neck to kill them in company, except in the most intimate circles.”

Rats existed in prehistoric days and reappeared at the time of the Crusades in the Koran of Musrattus, the black rat. This animal overran Europe with amazing speed. As barbarian invasions from the East swept aside the established civilizations of Northern Europe, so did the invasion of hordes of the more ferocious, Asiatic, brown rats, *Mus Decumanus*, wipe out the established hegemony of the black rats. Indeed, Dr. Zinsser believes there is an amazing similarity between the man and rat. They are both omniverous, breed at all seasons, and are most amorous in the springtime. They both make ferocious war on their own kind, but the rat, as yet, has not become nationalized. If rat continues to ape man, however, we may yet have French rats eating German ones, and Nazi rats attacking Communist or Jewish rats. They both fight bravely alone but know how to organize armies and fight in hordes when necessary. Neither rat nor man has achieved social, commercial, or economic stability; they are merely, so far, the most successful animals of prey. Neither is of any earthly use to any other species of living things.

The qualities by which the Europeans conquered the aborigines of the world are the same by which the brown rat exterminated the black; for the battle has been pitiless to the strong, and the weak have been annihilated. "Isolated colonies of black rats survive as weaker nations survive until the stronger ones desire the little they still possess." But rat has an excuse; he has no soul. Let us not despair, however, for evolution is still working, and in only two thousand years we have had Homer and St. Francis, Copernicus and Galileo, Shakespeare, Pascal, Newton, Goethe, Bach, and Beethoven. "The heart has begun to ponder and grope."

After many wanderings we finally come, in Chapter XII to the will-o'-the-wisp hero of our biography—typhus fever. Typhus is an acute fever caused by minute, bacillus-like organisms called *Rickettsiae*. In this country it exists in a great reservoir of rats, among whom the disease is perpetuated by transmission from rat to rat fleas and rat lice. A human being contracts the disease from the bite of one of these infected fleas. If this particular person is infected with lice, the lice in turn get the disease and can transmit it to other humans. If the community in which the victim lives is louse infected, an epidemic results. It is thus easy to see why the disease has been variously called in former times "camp fever" and "famine fever". Although the disease has existed in some form or other since the days of prehistoric man, the earliest recorded severe European epidemic occurred in 1489 and 1490 among the forces of Ferdinand and Isabella who were fighting with the Moors for the possession of Granada. When the Spanish army was reviewed in 1490, the generals noticed that 20,000 men were missing from the rolls, and of these 3000 had been killed by the Moors and 17,000 had died of disease. Since that time Typhus has come to be "the inevitable and expected companion of war and revolution . . . It added to the terror of famine and floods; it stalked stealthily through the wretched quarters of the poor in cities and villages; it flourished in prisons and even went to sea in ships."

Using great literary skill and charm of style Dr. Zinsser has blended together a fund of scientific learning with a philosophy born of viewing lives and years in terms of millions, and has

flavored the combination with a sparkling, salty humor. If there are some who wonder at the temerity of a bacteriologist in invading the field of polite letters, they will be quickly set right by Dr. Zinsser's preface, in which he says that his book is, in a way, "a protest against the American attitude which tends to insist that a specialist have no interest beyond his chosen field . . . that he should stick to his job like 'a louse to a pig's back'." He believes that engaging in one type of intelligent occupation should increase comprehension for all things in general. In reading the book one does truly feel that the author's is a rounded and complete mind, and to this the many students who have listened to his formal lectures at Harvard Medical School will add ready corroboration.

by Merrill Moore

THE APPLICATION OF SCIENTIFIC METHODS TO SOCIOLOGY

THE APPLICATION OF SCIENTIFIC METHODS TO SOCIOLOGY. By John Candler Cobb. Chapman and Grimes, Boston, 1934. Pp. 161. \$2.00.

In an age when the academic field of sociology has become so broad that it is almost indistinguishable from the territory of knowledge claimed by the advocates of social psychology, it is refreshing to hear one social philosopher calling for order. John Candler Cobb does exactly that in this carefully thought out document in which he bluntly proposes that scientific method, as a technique and as an instrument, be used to measure and control sociological studies and problems. The author is not an academician, but one who might be called a "speculative pragmatist" though actually a business man. For many years he observed business conditions nationally and in New England, and he correlated his experiences and observations with what he knew of

the theoretical aspects of economic life. A modern Platonist of a sort, he saw the nation and its industrial metabolism as phenomena occurring in the body politic and he came to believe that these reactions could be observed and understood much as the human organism may be studied. He occupied, in his thinking, a position near and somewhere between the progressive Nineteenth Century sociologist who first saw the Industrial Revolution and its effects, and the modern Twentieth Century physician who sees the dawning of a new day in the understanding of man, his body, and his thoughts. Behind Money, Cobb's primary interest was in Man and this fact led him into many business and social activities, notable among which was his concern over tariff problems. He has been called "The Father of the Tariff Commission" and his rôle in the early development of this institution is significant.

The contents of his book are arranged with the method he himself advocates. Ten short chapter divisions give the essential preparation the reader needs to approach the six appendices. The topics treated in the first half of the book are: *The Development of Social Science, Definition of Social Science, Terminology, Philosophy and Dialectics, Qualitative and Quantitative Data, Different Types of Data, Difficulties and Confusion, Scientific Psychology and Summary*. These considerations occupy sixty-three pages and are mainly concerned with developing the author's thesis from conventional and authoritative sources. The six appendices contain more of his original views and his creative writing; the digestion and utilization of his material. He considers the following subjects in this order: I. *Quantitative Restating of Sociological and Economic Problems*. II. *The Social Sciences*. III. *Quantitative Analysis and the Evolution of Economic Science*. IV. *The Significance and Use of Data in the Social Sciences*. V. *A Study of Social Science Data and Their Use*. VI. *The Relations of Psychology and Social Science*.

His own summary of his own views is logical and very unpretentious and expresses his ideas better than any reviewer could. An abbreviated quotation follows: "The fundamental principles underlying all sciences are the same . . . The development of quantitative analysis in social science is a normal growth characteristic of all sciences. Its work will go on and should go on as long

as there are unsolved problems. The fact that five men or five generations of men have failed to solve a problem by quantitative methods is not proof that it cannot be solved . . . The scientific method of approach to the problems of social science aims to make of social science a clearly defined, effective, vital science. This can be accomplished only by patient, painstaking research applied to clearing up, one at a time, the difficulties and complexities which confront its purpose."

It is obvious that on this point critics may say: "This thinker is a gnostic; he believes in knowledge and control through knowledge." That is exactly Cobb's point. He cannot be called a naïve believer because he infers insight and understanding of the complicated epistemological problems that underlie his premises. He does not, as some reviewers may say, place too blind a trust in quantitative, numerological, and statistic methods. His implication, both direct and indirect, is for the final use of the method of objective and reflective thought. He assumes a purpose. It is at these points that John Cobb reveals himself as a social philosopher; a meliorist. He states himself most pointedly in appendix VI which, in the opinion of this reviewer, is the most important in the book and contains expressed in crystallized form his ideas about the broad meanings of social problems: "... The conclusion from this presentation is that psychological data to be valuable to social science must not only be convincingly proven, but also presented with the methodology and technique for measurable application to the problems of sociology, economics, education, criminology, psychiatry or neurology, all of them watching with deep concern and sympathetic interest the progress of psychology in overcoming conditions characterized by Mill as a 'blot on the face of science'."

By this stand, John Candler Cobb definitely places himself in and of this century. His mental habitat is the Twentieth, where social, economic and scientific conditions can only be characterized by the words "change", "experiment", and attempts to apply the principles he believes in. It is very probable that future investigations will point to this author's utterances as being among the first words this interesting era had to say. We are in it now. He obviously saw it coming.